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ANTHROPO-THEOLOGY OF JOHANN HEINRICH SCHÜTTE

Content: Medicine; Spirituality of diseases; Anthro-po-theology.

Johann Heinrich Schütte (1694-1774) was a medical doctor educated in the University of Jena who received in 1720 the doctor degree in the University of Utrecht.¹ In 1720-1722, he was a city physician in Vianen near Utrecht. Afterwards, he lived in his hometown of Soest and in 1725, he moved to Kleve in Westphalia. In 1731, he was appointed a medical overseer of mineral springs in Schwelm which he investigated,² which led to the revival of the health resort in this city. In 1732, he became an army physician in Hamm and then moved back to Kleve. In 1741, he discovered mineral sources in Kleve and in 1742, a health resort was opened in Kleve. Justifiably proud of his discovery and, effectively, of the contribution to the economy of the city, he published several studies on

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- ¹ Friedrich Börner, *Nachrichten von den vornehmsten Lebensumständen und Schriften jeztlebender berühmter Aerzte und Naturforscher in und um Deutschland*, Wolfenbüttel: Johann Christoph Meißner 1749, vol. 1, pp. 672-703, 1755, vol. 3, p. 781; reprinted with few additions in: Johan Heinrich Martin Ernesti, *Friedrich Carl Gottlob Hirsching's Historisch-literarisches Handbuch berühmter und denkwürdiger Personen, welche in dem achtzehnten Jahrhunderte gestorben sind*, Leipzig: Schwickert 1808, vol. 11, pt. 2, pp. 263-277; Franz Josef Schmidt, Vorbemerkung, in: Johann Heinrich Schütte, *Verordnung über das Gesundheitswesen der Stadt Vianen* [1723], Hamm 1976.
- ² Johann Heinrich Schütte, *Neue Beschreibung des Schwelmer Gesund-Brunnens, Worinnen Desselben eigentliche Historie, eine Natur-gemässe Untersuchung des wahren Mineralischen Gehalts, die Würckung mit besonderen Curen, nebst Anweisung zum nützlichen Gebrauch im Trincken und Baden, und Warnung für dessen schädlichen Mißbrauch enthalten ist*, Soest: Joseph Wolschendorff, Iserlohn: Joh[ann] Thomas Wolschendorff 1733.

the topic.³ This discovery required some knowledge of mineralogy and, in fact, Schütte had already exhibited his proficiency in this area in his university years.⁴

Medicine

A practicing and competent physician, Schütte wrote works that popularized medicine based on the results of science of his times. He presented a classification of illnesses (M 13)⁵ and listed 26 causes of illnesses, which included: the disposition of humans, bad air (15), bad diet (17) including bad drinks (19), lack of motion or work, lack of rest (20), lack of sleep, problem with waking up (21), anger (22), fear (23), sadness, excessive joy

³ Joh[ann] Heinrich Schütte, *Beschreibung des Clevischen Gesund-Brun[n]ens: Worinnen von der sehr angenehmen Gegend um diesen Brunnen, vom Ursprung und Erfindung des Gesund-Brunnens, von dessen mineralischen Gehalt, Kraft und Würckung, wie auch von desselben Gebrauch im Trincken und Baden gehandelt is*, Cleve: Löhner; Dortmund: Gedruckt mit Bädekerischen Schriften 1742; *Der rechte Gebrauch und die kräftige Würkung des Clevischen Gesund-Brunnens; das ist: Nützliche Anweisung, wie dieses Mineralwasser im Trinken und Baden Curmässig zu gebrauchen; Nebst Erzählung einiger besonderer Curen, welche unter Gottes Segen, durch Würkung dieses Wassers geschehen sind*, [Cleve]: Clevischer Gesundbrunnen 1751; see also several of his articles in *Wochentliche Duisburgische Adresse- und Intelligenz-Zettel* 1741, nos. 41-49; 1742, nos. 20, 29, 45; 1743, nos. 20-23; 1744, no. 20.

⁴ As testified by his book, Jo[hannes] Henr[ichus] Schütteus, *Ὀρυκτογραφία Jenensis, sive fossilium et mineralium in agro Jenensi brevissima descriptio*, Lipsiae et Susati: Sumptibus Josephi Wolschendorffii, Typis Hermannianis 1720, reissued: Io[hannes] Henric[hus] Schütteus, *Oryctographia Ienensis, sive fossilium et mineralium in agro Ienensi brevissima descriptio*, Ienae: Sum[p]tib[us] Theod[ori] Wilh[elmi] Ernest[i] Gütthii 1761; the book was praised in *Journal für die Liebhaber des Steinreichs und der Konchyliologie* 2 (1775), pp. 504-505, 3 (1776), pp. 126-132.

⁵ References are used to the following publications of Schütte:

^A – *Anthropotheologia das ist Anweisung wie man aus der Betrachtung des Menschen nemlich seines Leibes, dessen Glieder und deren Verrichtungen der Seele und ihren Kräften Vermehrung und Unterhaltung des menschlichen Geschlechtes, des Lebens, der Geburt, des Alters, Lebensziels, Krankheiten, Todes, und Auferstehung von den Toden die Allmacht, Weisheit, Gerechtigkeit, Güte und Vorsorge Gottes erkennen könne zur Verherrlichung des grossen Gottes und Erbauung des Nechsten*, Halle: Johann Justinus Gebauer 1769.

^M – *Medicinisher Unterricht von den Ursachen derer Kranckheiten und des Todes. Von den glücklichen und unglücklichen Curen. Von der Artzney-Kunst. Von den Christlichen wahren Aertzten, und von den Schein-Aertzten und Medicinischen Mietlingen*, Soest: Joh[ann] Georg Hermann 1732.

^V – Von demjenigen, was in der menschlichen Kranckheiten und Tode Göttlich ist, *Wochentliche Duisburgische Adresse- und Intelligenz-Zettel* 1740, nos. 9-11, 15-17; there is no pagination.

(24), passionate love (25), envy, imagination (26), constipation (28), problems with sweating, with passing urine (29), excessive flow in hemorrhoidal vein, problems with falling asleep (30), the environment (31), sudden change of lifestyle, untimely change of clothing and bedding (32), and a particular profession (33). He discussed at length good and bad cures (33), and presented the details of the medical art (78).

In his monograph on the mineral waters in Schwelm, he provided the results of chemical analysis of waters and discussed its efficacy in 43 kinds of health problems, which included lost appetite (125),⁶ stomach problems, thick blood (128), epilepsy (131), jaundice (132), scurvy (133), melancholy (137), arthritis (139), difficulty with impregnation (142), problems with urination, kidney stones (144), paralysis (145), swollen feet (149), French illness [syphilis] (150), blindness (160), and problems with hearing (163). He was fully aware of the fact that no mineral water can cure all problems (168) and also discussed the misuse and abuse of such waters (166).⁷

The bar set by Schütte for people willing to enter the medical profession was fairly demanding and fitting for medicine that he considered to be the most noble, the hardest, and the most important art. The prospective physician should have knowledge in 12 fields: 1. physics or natural science; 2. anatomy (no. 22, [2])⁸; 3. physiology; 4. pathology; 5. semiotic, the knowledge of the signs/symptoms of illnesses ([3]); 6. therapeutics, the art of healing illnesses (no. 23, [1]); 7. dietetics; 8. botany; 9. pharmacy ([2]); 10. surgery; 11. obstetrics; and 12. forensic medicine. Moreover, a candidate for a physician must know Greek and Latin, study for several years in a university, and fear God ([3]).

Spirituality of diseases

Schütte was a competent scientist, but he was also a Christian with deep convictions and he never separated his scholarly pursuits from the spiritual

⁶ Schütte, *Neue Beschreibung*.

⁷ The book about the water from Cleve, Schütte, *Beschreibung des Clevischen Gesund-Brun[n]ens*, covers similar ground that includes the chemistry of the water (p. 42), and its efficacy (p. 65) for an internal (p. 86) and external use (p. 110). See also his *Der rechte Gebrauch*, which describes 34 cases of the beneficial application of the Cleve water.

⁸ Jo[hann] He[i]nr[ich] Schütte, *Von der Wichtigkeit der Artzneykunst, Wochentliche Duisburgische Adresse- und Intelligenz-Zettel* 1741, nos. 22-23; cf. Schütte, *Verordnung*, pp. 9-10.

aspects of natural phenomena. As to medicine, he was convinced that there is in each illness what he called a divine aspect (etwas Göttliches) and he regretted the fact that, in his days, this aspect was usually neglected by physicians and patients (M 9). And thus, except for natural causes, there are also causes due to God's designs. People bring upon themselves illnesses through their sins (127) so that illnesses become educational punishments to show people that they are mortal and their illnesses are a call to repentance (128); they are sent to lead people to the correction of their lives and to conversion (6, A 285), but also, through illnesses, the sick can be an example of patience, hope, and self-possession (A 306). In the Old Testament, God wanted to show through illness that He is the only true God of Israel. In the New Testament, God wanted to advance through illnesses His glory and to show that Christ is the true Messiah; also, Christ wanted to strengthen His teachings through healing and by resurrecting people, to convert people and to allow the church to grow (V 11.[4]; M 8). However, who knows the designs of God to say why one person was afflicted by an illness and another was not (V 11.[5])?

Death is a punishment for sins but also a sign of grace since long or eternal living in this body which becomes weaker with age would be unbearable (A 300). If the pious die early, it is to avoid danger, need, and anxiety before God strikes the land (M 9, A 297). For them, death is "the door to heaven," and for sinners, it is "the entry to eternal damnation" (M 9, A 313). God allows that they die in their innocence; and thus, they will not become sinners. Also, lucky are such children since so much suffering is spared to them (A 250).

There are two causes of illnesses: divine and natural, so, there are two ways of healing: penance and prayer on the one hand, and proper medical treatment on the other (V 15.[3]); however, relying only on natural means is not sufficient (V 17.[3]). Therefore, a detailed protocol a Christian patient should follow is a mixture of spiritual and naturalistic aspects. Illnesses should be patiently endured and patients should pray (M 129). Schütte outlined a sequence of duties for Christian patients. The 1st duty is that patients should thank God for all gifts received so far including their health (130); the 2nd duty: they should ask God for forgiveness of sinful uses of their bodies and 3rd: thank for the illness (131); 4th: patients should treat their illness very seriously and prepare themselves for death (133); 5th: before a person sends for a doctor, the person should do penance and be reconciled with God (141); 6th: a person should call for a physician who

is a Christian (152): 7th: before asking for a physician, a patient should ask God to bless the treatment (160); 8th: the patient should tell the doctor all circumstances of falling ill (161); 9th: the patient should follow the doctor's treatment (169) and 10th: be patient during this treatment (195); 11th: the treatment should be continued as long as the physician determines it (198); 12th: the patient should not be impatient toward attendants (200); 13th: when a treatment does not work, the patient should be prepared to die (202); 14th: every cured patient should thank God and live a godly life (234); 15th: the cured patient should express the gratitude to the physician (236). Interestingly, God may go directly against the natural means applied by the physician; and thus, drugs do not help when God removes their healing power, so the patient is not healed (V 16.[2]; A 309) and a physician should not be blamed for the death of a patient whereby divine providence would be denied in respect to the human life (V 17.[3]). The last statement could be construed as a universal defense against medical malpractice... Maybe a touch of such a sentiment can be detected in Schütte's requirements for a good Christian physician (M 86), who should be honest, exercise his profession with great zeal, always study (88), be in good terms with other physicians and consult with them, should treat every patient the same way (90), consider himself to be a tool of God's providence, and should not give patients false hopes (92). In any event, the spiritual aspect of medicine is so important for Schütte, that he even included in his book seven hymns to be sung by Christian visitors of the health resort: a hymn for the blessing of treatment, a morning hymn, a hymn that is a spiritual reflection of the treatment, a hymn for a walk, a consolation hymn when the treatment appears to have no effect, an evening hymn, and a gratitude hymn.⁹

⁹ Schütte, *Neue Beschreibung*, pp. [221-232]. Five of these hymns are also included in Mitglied der Brunnen-Gesellschaft, *Amusemens des eaux de Cleve, oder Vergnügungen und Ergötlichkeiten bey denen Wassern zu Cleve. Zum Nutzen derjenigen, welche die angenehme Gegenden und Merkwürdigkeiten besehen, oder diese Mineral-Wasser gebrauchen wollen*, Lemgo: Johann Heinrich Meyer 1748, pp. 299-304. The book describes a trip from Amsterdam to Kleve. It is authored by a member of some Brunnen-Gesellschaft and it mentions Schütte in the Vorrede as the main source of information about Kleve (p. [4]) and depicts Schütte as a participant of many conversations. This and his authorship of hymns in the appendix seems to indicate that Schütte himself penned the book.

Anthropo-theology

As mentioned, Schütte, a practicing scientist, listed anatomy as an indispensable part of medical education since anatomy is the foundation of medicine.¹⁰ A physician should have a good knowledge of anatomy down to the smallest detail to be able to determine the causes of illnesses. Schütte praised the 1725 Medicinal-Edict issued by Friedrich Wilhelm III, the king of Prussia, requiring that all physicians should demonstrate their mastery of anatomy (N 17). “There is nothing more unsuitable and more dangerous than a surgeon/physician unfamiliar with anatomy.”¹¹ However, he saw anatomy as useful for other areas of intellectual endeavor. Anatomy is useful for self-knowledge (39), to know one’s limitations and to think about one’s mortality (40), but, in particular, it is useful for theology. Preachers should know anatomy to properly understand Biblical passages that speak about body parts and they should admire the omnipotence and wisdom of God from the makeup of the human body (32). They could use this knowledge in trying to convince atheists and the godless about the existence of God (33). The smallest creatures speak about the omnipotent Creator. Man is the most important creation, a microcosm, a masterpiece of the great Master, and thus, man is “the most important page in the book of nature” to convince anyone about the existence of God (36). For this reason, at the age of 74, Schütte penned a book to be a part of physico-theology. He followed in the footsteps of Derham, Ahlwardt, Lesser, and Schirach, whose names he mentioned (A Vorbericht [3]), and many other physico-theologians. As a practitioner of science and an ardent Christian believer he wanted to contribute to this field by addressing his book not only to the learned, but also to the unlearned ([5]), and to present it, like Galen, to God instead of a hymn of praise so that others could also recognize the work of God ([6]) since no knowledge is more important than the knowledge of God and moral self-knowledge ([4]).

Physico-theologians used various domains of natural science as the source leading to the recognition of the work of God, from very broad: the entire cosmos, the earth as a whole, to fairly specific knowledge: birds, plants, flowers, to very specific: the heart, the eye, etc. Schütte saw the hu-

¹⁰ Schütte, *Von der Wichtigkeit der Artzneykunst*, no. 22, p. [3].

¹¹ Io[hannes] Henricus Schütteus, *Dissertatio chirurgica de superfluis et noxiis quibusdam in chirurgia*, Altorfii: Litteris Iod[oci] Guil[ielmi] Kohlesii Acad[emici] Typogr[aphi] 1719, p. 16.

man being as the most perfect creation and as the best proof of the existence of God. He wrote about various aspects of humanness, but over a half of his *Anthropotheologia* is devoted to the anatomy of the human body. To a large extent, this part of the book reads like a popular science, an exposition of anatomy for everyone. Here is an example of his description of the anatomy of feet: “The feet are equipped with a large number of small bones, very neatly and firmly connected with one another, fitted together with muscles and veins, which serve to keep the body upright in all movements of the hips and feet, and to prevent it from falling in such a way that they are ready, with the slightest swaying of the body, to maintain it in the right posture through their quick and easy movement, the common connection of the parts, and the *centrum gravitatis*, or the center of gravity” (A 24). To this we can add a description of nails, which make stronger the tips of fingers and toes: “The nails are white, hard, and flexible parts that come close to the cartilage; they are transparent, horn-like, small, semicircular sheets: they consist of many small tubes, which lie densely on top of each other like layers, *lamellae*. At the point where they begin, there are small sinewy threads, in the form of little moles. If the nails are pulled away by force, then various small holes remain, where the horn-like substance of the nails has the shape of a net” (213). Schütte went quite systematically through the entire body, from head to toe, inside and outside, providing fairly detailed description of anatomy and physiology: the head and brain (36), the face, an adornment of the human being, a mirror of the human soul (44), including the eyes (45), to show that no one can invent anything so artful as the human eye, the work of God (57), ears (59), the nose (73), and the mouth (77); afterwards: the throat, stomach, digestion (91), pancreas, gall, *chyle* (98), intestines (105), the heart and the blood circulation (113), sweating (128), lungs (132), speech (139), excretion (146), liver and gall (148), spleen (151), kidneys (153), the bladder (155), procreation and feeding the foetus (159); incidentally, not to offend the faint-hearted (*schwache Gemüther*) (160), the description of genitals is skipped and only the uterus is described (161) along with the development of the foetus (169); this includes a long discussion of what are “the tiny animals” in sperm (184). Then there are nerves (191), muscles (199), bones (206), 260 of them (208), cartilage (211), ligaments (212), tendons (213), and, finally, hair (214).¹² This detailed account of anatomy and physiology should show to the read-

¹² For a similar list, cf. *Amusemens*, p. 8.

er that the makeup of the human body is most perfect, more perfect than the body of any animal. In spite of certain commonalities, the human body is made better, it has more beautiful symmetry, agreement of parts, and proportion. Nothing is out of order, it lacks nothing and there is nothing redundant; everything is always working, everything is in a proper place and for a particular purpose (17). The form of the human body is the best possible for such a rational creature with the head and feet on the straight line, with the head on the top (20-21). In proportion to the body, the brain is the largest among animals, which would be difficult to carry in the head parallel to the body, as in animals (22). All aspects of the anatomy, every anatomical detail clearly points to the divine forethought in the design and the execution of the human body, the work that was made possible only through the divine agency – and hence, God exists.

In his attempt to be comprehensive in the area of anthropo-theology, Schütte included also other aspects of human existence as proofs of the work of God and of His providential care. More important than the body is the soul, even though much less detail can be provided in respect to its nature and even though it is still a mystery how exactly the union of the body and soul is accomplished (A 8, 241). In Schütte's view, at the beginning, Eve got her soul from Adam's rib, but not by division, since the spirit is indivisible (11), and so God derives the souls of children from the souls of their parents, which indicates that the souls of all humans were present already in the first parents and were created in them (12).

The brain is the seat of the soul (A 43). It has representations, inclinations, desires. Animals have such a soul as well (217, 332). The human soul is rational, it can reason and can process sensory data by comparing them and assessing them; it possesses fundamental truths. The soul is a simple incorporeal substance that is immortal (218), self-aware, endowed with memory (219); it constantly thinks, in the waking state and in sleep. The essence of the rational soul is in the power of representation (*vorstellende Kraft*) which can generate clear, distinct, and general concepts. The animal soul knows no general truths, does not reason, understands no speech, and recognizes no virtue. The human soul is endowed with intelligence, the power of reflection and judgment, free will, memory, imagination, and conscience (220-221, 333). The soul concludes from the examination of all things that there is an eternal, self-existing, uncreated, omnipotent, wise, and good Being that created the world. In fact, in each soul there is a strong conviction of the existence of the most high Being, God, the cause of all goodness (222).

The soul is endowed with the power of making choices, the will. The will chooses evil when it is presented under the disguise of good which is an error stemming from sensory perception (A 224), from hasty reasoning or reasoning going beyond the limits of reason. The rules imprinted on the soul direct the will toward good and away from evil. The choices of the will are judged by conscience. The will rules over the intellect and the body. The intellect has by itself no freedom and it approves truths when moved so by the will (225). The intellect does not abandon errors when the will is evil (226). The conscience is an unbiased judge, the judge of a person's thoughts, words, and acts to see whether they agree with the will of God (227). The conscience is an accuser, witness, judge, and punisher (229). An active conscience is the throne of the divine presence in the soul and the fruit of conscience is the living judgment of God's justice planted in the soul. The conscience can be asleep as in Spinoza (230). The natural conscience tells people to love and honor God and not hurt anyone (230).

One aspect of the human life that Schütte investigated was the human demography. Using the data provided mainly by Süßmilch,¹³ he observed that nearly the same number of boys and girls are born (250) with slightly more boys since more males die than females due to wars, and to hard and dangerous work; also, more boys than girls die within the first year (251); as a result, among 15- and 16-year olds, the number of boys is almost the same as the number of girls, but there are more widows than widowers who remarry more often (253). Moreover, the proportion of people of the same age who are dying does not change. All of it is providential (257) since the length of life for each person is determined by God (292); this is to coordinate the lengths of life of all people and thereby the rate of death; for this reason, most children die within the first year (249): 1/4th within the first year, 1/9th within the second year, 1/16th within the third year, etc. (250). And so, God determines the time of death, also, the kind of death, some suddenly, some after a protracted illness to lead to conversion (306). Human life is a play, the world is a playhouse, God is the director (276), and all people should play their assigned roles; in fact, the role itself is not important, but how it is played since this determines the person's eternal destiny (277).

All the aspects of the human life are for Schütte clear proofs not only of the existence of God, but also proofs of the divine providential care

¹³ Johann Peter Süßmilch, *Die göttliche Ordnung in den Veränderungen des menschlichen Geschlechts, aus der Geburt, Tod, und Fortpflanzung desselben erwiesen*, Berlin: J.C. Spener 1741.

for His creation. Through physical self-knowledge people arrive at the knowledge of the omnipotent, omniscient, holy, good, praiseworthy Creator who not only created their body and endowed it with an immortal soul, but who also guides them, feeds them, warns about various dangers, and wants them to have an eternal life (A [5]). The wondrous makeup of the human body is a proof of the impossibility that any of the anatomical details could arise by itself from some random configuration of particles of matter. Particularly the brain, the place, where the body meets the soul, is a supreme showcase of the divine power and ingenuity, and thus, “the brain with all its small parts is so artfully made and put together that even an atheist can be convinced that God exists” (A 43). It is interesting that Schütte believed, at least early on, that no true atheists existed since the beginning of the world until his times, which is the result of their pride which motivates them to concoct arguments against the existence of God to show off their ingenuity and acumen – and such ones are worse than the devil since the devil at least believes that God exists and trembles.¹⁴ Regardless, a detailed investigation of the human anatomy by a willing atheist with the theological assistance of Schütte opens a possibility of turning around the atheist’s antireligious convictions. The acquaintance with the physical makeup of humans is good for every soul since it can bring even a believer closer to God, to a better appreciation of His power and wisdom. This was a belief that led physico-theologians to their efforts to use the physical knowledge of the world and of any of its parts to lead unbelievers to faith and believers to the deepening of their faith. They would agree with Schütte’s principle: where the physicist/naturalist ends, there the physician and economist, but also the Christian and theologian begins.¹⁵ The knowledge of the world is a springboard of religious convictions. The last book Schütte wrote is a testimony of his belief that this is the right position for a naturalist to take.

Abstract

Johann Heinrich Schütte was an eighteenth-century physician who was keenly interested in theology and, in the spirit of the then reigning physico-theology, he was convinced his profession can contribute to theology; he authored a book on anthro-po-theology in which he showed that all as-

¹⁴ Schüttees, *Ὀρυκτογραφία Jenensis*, Praefatio, pp. [3-4].

¹⁵ Schüttees, *Ὀρυκτογραφία Jenensis*, p. [1].

pects of the human life – physical, spiritual, and social – are a clear proof of the existence of God and of His providential care for His creation.

Keywords: *Johann Heinrich Schütte, medicine, anatomy, physico-theology, anthropo-theology*

Antropoteologia Johanna Heinricha Schütte

Streszczenie

Johann Heinrich Schütte był osiemnastowiecznym lekarzem żywo zainteresowanym teologią i w duchu panującej wówczas fizykoteologii był przekonany, że jego zawód może przyczynić się do rozwoju teologii. Schütte jest autorem książki o antropoteologii, w której pokazał, że wszystkie aspekty ludzkiego życia – fizyczne, duchowe i społeczne – są wyraźnym dowodem na istnienie Boga i Jego opatrnościowej troski o Jego stworzenie.

Słowa kluczowe: *Johann Heinrich Schütte, medycyna, anatomia, fizykoteologia, antropoteologia*

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