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p. 817

Chapter 7

Concerning Cases of Casuistry about Specters

Very often has the devil attempted to fool, frighten, trouble, and afflict men through specters and apparitions, which seize the senses of men either through images or through external sounds.

Many examples of this are contained both in sacred and secular history.

In sacred history we read about the pseudo-Samuel produced from the underworld at Saul's request by the soothsayer (1 Sam 28:11). They certainly had held him for the true Samuel, the priest, but there are many indications in the text that the specter was demonic.

For Saul himself recognized that the Lord had withdrawn from him and no more spoke with him through the prophets (v.6). Therefore, is it now believable that, finally, after Samuel died, the Lord dealt with Saul through the Prophet Samuel?

The soothsayer also recognized, that Saul expelled all the seers and magicians from the land (v.9). And he did this, immediately after the law of the Lord, which forbade anyone to consult

p.818

soothsayers (Deut 18:10). Therefore it is not befitting that the spirit of the Prophet Samuel appeared to Saul against the express prohibition of God.

The pseudo-Samuel also says to Saul, "Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me" (v.19). The spirit of the true Samuel, however, was in the hand of God (Wis. 3:1), where the spirit of Saul did not arrive, because out of despair he inflicted violent hands on himself [committed suicide].

Finally, Samuel had died at least two whole years earlier, and his body had now returned to ashes. Now, is it therefore believable that Satan resuscitated it? He wouldn't have said this unless he was rather impious, for the devil is able to resuscitate the dead no more than he is able to create the living.

Because of this Augustine calls that specter the image of the dead Samuel (2nd book "Concerning the Doctrine of Christ" chapter 23) and he teaches methodically elsewhere that it was not the true resuscitated Samuel. Rather, he teaches that the devil, who transforms into an angel of light, appeared in the form of Samuel (second book "Concerning the Miracles of Sacred Scripture" chapter 11).

Concerning the specters infesting Egypt, when God led his people out, it can be read in Wisdom 17. Concerning the specters of Babylon, it can truly be read in truth (Isaiah 13, 34). The New Testament also makes mention of specters, as when the disciples held Christ to be a

specter walking on the waves in the sea (Matt 14:26). And they thought they saw a spirit after his resurrection when, although the doors were closed suddenly, he stood in their midst (Lk. 24:37).

In church history it is read concerning Moses Cretensius, a Jewish imposter, who persuaded the Jews living in Crete that he was Moses sent on a mission. This mission was that he might lead the Jews dwelling on that island through the sea to the Promised Land. And when a naïve individual committed himself to the sea, many perished. Some were torn violently asunder by the rocks, and some were suffocated by the waters. And when they were ready enough to kill that imposter, they were unable to seize him, for he had vanished. And he moved many to the suspicion that he was a demon straight from the chariot of Pluto, who put on the form of a man in order to ruin that clan of Jews (as it is in the writings of Socrates book 7 "Ecclesiastical History" chapter 38).

p.819

In the writings of the Fathers many examples are extant of specters, who rendered a household unsafe. Augustine relates (bk. 22 "Concerning the City of God" chapter 8) concerning the infested house of a certain Hesperius, a Tribune of the people, whose servants and animals had been seriously thrown into disarray by a maligned spirit.

Gregory Nussenus writes concerning infested baths in the life of Gregory Neocaesarensis, in which many specters brought evils upon those entering. He also says that no one, who remained in the baths at night, had left alive in the morning, before the servant of Gregory Neocaesariensis.

Similar things are read among the profane authors. Pliny relates (book 7 letter 27 "To the Athenian Cities") that there had been a house in which there was an enormous and slim ghost. This ghost was filling the house itself with the rattling of chains, with which it was seen bound. On account of this, since no one would dare to inhabit the house, it was sold for a small price.

He likewise relates concerning the home of Dionis Plutarchus in his life. And he affirmed concerning the home of Caesar Caligula, in which he died at the same time, that no night came to an end without some terror having taken place (Suetonius in Caligula).

Cardanus writes (book 16 chapter 93) concerning a variety of things, that a certain noble among the highest of Parma family occupied a citadel, in which there is a hall. There under a furnace an old woman, now in her hundredth year, appeared whenever someone was about to die. See similar examples (V Vierum book 1 "Concerning the thorough Stigmatization by Demons" chapter 15 and Alexander from Alexandria book 2 "Geneal. Dier." chapter 9 and book 4 chapter 19).

Therefore either places or men or beasts are infested by specters.

The places are either private, such as a house, hall, farm, metal mines and the like; or public, such as temples, cemeteries, monasteries, a meeting house, hot baths, baths, seas, rivers, and lakes.

They are infested, however, either on account of men, or on account of the riches of men.

On account of men certain places are disturbed, in which wicked men, polluted with rather manifest wickednesses, once lived, or are still living. For example, the house of Nero, after his mother was killed, was always disturbed by spirits. And the house of Otto, or whatever place where Otto was discovered after Galbam was killed, is also disturbed. Suetonius relates these things.

For their possessions were avenged by the vengeful rage of the maligned spirit, even while they were still alive.

On account of riches are the metal mines disturbed, and wherever treasures have by chance been buried.

Men also are bothered in many a way by specters, especially those placed in public office, or doing other works of their vocation. For Satan is hostile to these before others. Thus ministers of the church, wherever they are, are possessed by specters. When traveling about, they are often deceived by the foolish brightness, with which the spirit of obscurity often mingles itself, by which they are led away into the abyss, into the lake, into the rough places, etc. Many suffer from specters at nighttime: soldiers on guard, hunters, also women in labor. Sometimes even entire communities and provinces are infested, as happened at the time of Moses in Egypt, and 30 years before this time (in the year 1594), in the vicinity of Marchia, Spandavia, Fridberga, and Berlin, where specters appeared both by day and by night. They spoke to those, whom they wanted to frighten. They even scattered coins, mirrors, belts, wreaths, and papers. The things they touched were turned into madness, the likeness of demon possession.

Now and then specters don't wound men, but terrify [them] much, like the Pictavians in the parish of St. Paul in the year 1447. There was a spirit, who was breaking ladles and glassware. Although he threw stones, he nevertheless wounded none of the humans in the area. (Bonidus relates this in book 3, Concerning Demons).

Beasts also now and then sense the wickedness of specters. Here horses are heard at night whinnying in stables and kicking with fury, and cows bellowing and striking objects with their horns, as if they were wrestling with specters.

I will say nothing here concerning the variety of specters, who vex either with some visible image, or with a horrible sound, or with chuckling and laughter, or with a feeble rattling, or also with battles and blows. They wound those men themselves, or cattle. They ruin bowls, pots, dishes, and similar vessels. With all of these a maligned spirit strikes either terror into wretched mortals, or it arouses those who seek help, trying to defeat specters with their arts, as among of the instruments of the devil.

When anything concerning these diabolical illusions happens, the minds of men must be informed, lest they do something against conscience. Therefore it is worthy of effort, to set forth and explain them one at a time. With this in mind, we are about to do this with the help of God.

Casus I

Now must it be believed that spirits of the dead return and bother the living?

Response: The papists say that there are three kinds of spirits who disturb men and places; first there are devils, then spirits of men, damned to the punishments of hell, and thirdly, those who are being atoned for by the punishments of purgatory, as in the writing Peter

Thyraeum (part 1 concerning disturbed places chapter 3). But very similarly there are specters, all who are able to be troublesome to us, because they are from the devil. For it is most certain that the spirits of the dead don't return, but if they ever seemed to appear, they were diabolic illusions. For either they are spirits of the blessed, and these are resting "in the hand of God, and are not allowed to be tormented," (Wisdom 3:1) or they are spirits of the damned in hell, from which no spirit is freed. Also, no one returns to the living, because "a great chasm has been fixed between the damned and the living, so that a place of crossing to the other side is not given" (Luke 16:26). Purgatory, however, is a Platonic fiction, foreign to all Scripture, which doesn't speak of spirits after death except in two places, heaven and hell (Mark 16 and John 3). Augustine also wrote of this (book 1 "Concerning the Merits and Remission of Sins" chapter 28), "There is no middle place for anyone, except as it is able to be with the devil, who is not with Christ." And (book 5 "Hypognosticon") "The catholic faith believes that the first place is the kingdom of the heavens, and the second hell. We don't thoroughly know the third. On the contrary, we find that in the Scriptures it doesn't exist." Augustine also wrote (sermon 14 "Concerning the Words of the Apostle") that divisions of places are not given, except of two such places. He also wrote, "Between the right and the left no middle place is left."

If, therefore, we want to contemplate the opinion of spirits after this life, it is clear that the opinion

p. 822

concerning their return is altogether spun in vain.

The spirits of the dead saints don't want to return to us, because they are now in the comfort and joy of heaven, from which they don't want to mingle again with the miseries of the ones living here. In truth the spirits of the damned would certainly want to return, rather than experience the anguishes of hell. Instead of these things, they would desire to fully endure the miseries of this life. But they are not able, because no power of departing from the place of torments is conceded them. "It is only of divine power to recall a spirit from hell," says Augustine (sermon 104, Concerning Time). That, however, God wants to do this, we have no promise.

On the contrary, no spirit is able to wander apart from its body among us, much less to emit sounds or groans or even a voice. For such things happen through the means of a body. A body, however, is either now in a tomb reduced to ashes, or has decayed in some other way, and will not be restored to my spirit by God except on the Last Day. It cannot, however, be resuscitated by the devil, because resuscitation of bodies belongs to him, who effected their creation. Above all, however, God doesn't permit a malignant spirit to disturb the spirits of the blessed, which are now at rest, and to lead them around this way and that. "For the Lord guards all the bones of the righteous (Ps. 34)." Likewise it was not permitted Lazarus, to return from the bosom of Abraham to the brothers of the rich dinner guest (Luke 16). For God fosters those in his bosom. He doesn't send them to trouble men.

Therefore, whatever examples are brought forth for the appearance of human spirits, they are mere mockeries from Satan, who is accustomed to put on the face and the clothes and the mannerism and the voice of a man, because he wants to fool others. The works of the appearances of ghosts also testify to this. They either persuade false things, or are annoying the living with illnesses or even outward violence. This is the continuing pursuit of the devil, who, for this reason, is called the father of murder and lying. In this sense Chrysostom writes well

(homily 29 in chapter 8), “Matthew, How will you convince me of this? It can’t be that you heard demons themselves shouting, can it? I am such a spirit! Truly even this speech proceeds from fraud and

p. 823

diabolic deception. For it is not a spirit of a dead one which speaks those things, but a demon, who fabricates these things in order to deceive listeners.”

Augustine (in the book “Concerning Worry about the Dead” chapter 10) writes concerning certain dead people, who either in sleep or in some other way appeared to the living. They indicated where their unburied bodies lay to those not knowing. After demonstrating the places, they also suggested that they could be buried. So, the ones who had been missing would be produced.

He himself, however, denies that spirits of the dead existed. But he says that the ghost of a dead man appeared in sleep and indicated something. The onlookers later realized this to be true. Truly, he thoroughly disregards that thing, despite the presence of witnesses. Finally he proves (chapter 13) that spirits of the dead are not interested in the miseries of men. He concludes, “Therefore are there spirits of the dead there, where they don’t see the things that are carried on? Or where they come out in this life to men, and in this way they see their tombs, or their bodies, whether they lie unburied or buried? In this way the distresses of the living differ, because either they suffer for their own mistakes, if such things caused recompense, or they rest in peace. It is just as Hosea was promised: It is where they put up with evils neither alone nor with someone. They are free from all evils, with which they put up alone and with others, while they lived here.

Luther also differs seriously concerning this thing (Germanic book “Concerning the Abuse of the Mass” tom 2 Jen. Germ. Fol. 31.), “Since we are Christians,” he says, “let us believe that the imposter-specters, who bothered men, are mere devils, and never spirits of the dead. They therefore simulate the voice and demeanor of the dead, as if they are able to be freed by us, in order to make a mockery of the most divine sacrament and testament of God, to snuff out faith, and to raise and strengthen detestable marketing of the mass (which now occupies the whole territory of Christians). Thus Luther.

This, therefore, we believe undoubtedly, that the spirits of the dead don’t at all return to us. Thus, less worried about our dead, we will be more prepared to resist the mockeries of Satan.

p. 824

Case II

Now, are we able to be informed from the appearances of specters, either concerning human things, or even concerning doctrines of faith?

Response: Specters are of two kinds, either appearances of demons themselves, or phantoms of missing men, even speaking with us in our sleep. The phantoms are of these men, although they are ignorant of it. These are called subjective specters, because they are not real men, but certain ones seen deceiving the imagination.

No one ought to acquire any knowledge in any situation from demons, because they are most deceitful spirits. Even when they speak true things, they render themselves suspects concerning falsehood.

Several people learned from nocturnal visions things for matters pertaining to this world. But those visions were not properly specters; they were images of men living here. But people, who were living in other places, knew entirely nothing, concerning the images, who were talking with the sleeping ones. Augustine relates examples of this matter (in the book “Concerning Worry about the Dead chapter 11), “When we were Milanians,” he says, “we heard that when a debt was demanded by a certain man, the possessions of a dead father were brought forward with caution. We also heard that it had happened now through a careless thing with the son not knowing from the father. The son began to be saddened gravely, and to be amazed that the dying father didn’t tell him, what he owed, since he even had made a will. Then with exceeding anxiety, his same father appeared in dreams, and when he was also warned again, he indicated the thing, by which that empty pledge had been. When the youth found and showed this, not only did he repel the charge of a false debt, but he also recovered his father’s contract, which his father hadn’t recovered, when the money was paid in full.”

Here the spirit of a man is thought to have born worry for the son, and to have come to him while he was sleeping, in order to free him from great trouble by telling him what he didn’t know.

But Augustine denies that it was a spirit or a body of a dead person. Rather he holds the opinion that the likeness of a man appeared. This is because not even spirits, but only likenesses of dead men, ignorant of what they do, are able to appear to the sleeping.

Augustine brings in another example from his own experiences. He says, “Eulogos, a rhetorician of Carthage was my student in the same practice, as if he was my own son. He related to us located in Milan, how after they returned to Africa, when he gave his students the Rhetoric books of Cicero, he was examining a lecture, which had been the following day. As he was examining the lecture, he offended a certain obscure place. With what I don’t know. Because he was anxious, he was scarcely able to sleep. On that night I revealed to him something he didn’t know while he was sleeping—on the contrary not I, but my image. I was unaware, and so far across the sea. I wasn’t doing anything out of the ordinary. I wasn’t sleeping. And I was in no way worrying about his troubles. How these things happened I don’t know. But it is agreed that they happened this way. Why don’t we believe that they happened in the same way? How is it that anyone would see the dead in dreams? Or how it may be that he may see even the living? Certainly neither man knew, nor did either care who or where or when he might dream their images.” Augustine says these things. He adds a third example (in chapter 12 of the same book) concerning a certain Curma, who belonged to a municipal curia of Tullius, which is near Hippo. While he was in a deep sleep, he saw that he, even among others, was baptized by Augustine. This, nevertheless, had not happened. Also afterwards he said that he was led into paradise. He said that this had been told him when he was sent from there to them, “Hurry, be baptized if there is strength in that place of the saints.” Then, after he was asked, he now responded that it had happened in order that he might be baptized by Augustine. The one who spoke to him again said to him, “Hurry, truly be baptized, for you saw that in a vision.” When he heard this, he proceeded to Hippo, and he received baptism with the rest by Augustine, who was ignorant of those things.

Augustine believes that this vision was an angelic activity, through the dispensation of the providence of God. This enjoyed friendship with both good and bad, according to the

unsearchable heights of their judgments, or, in order that the minds of men here might be prepared, or be deceived, or consoled, or frightened, just as mercy must be provided to each one or vengeance must be imposed, by him to whom the church sings mercy and justice.

These are things concerning night visions, which are also called specters.

The Papists, since they think that the spirits of the dead return and appear to men as specters (with whatever is false), from one error

p. 826

they string another, thinking that also doctrines of faith are able to be added. Peter Thyraeus (part 1 “Concerning Infested Places” chapter 3) writes, “The spirits of men don’t die with bodies. Rather after the bodies are put aside, they live another life. Even the spirits of the dead, who appear and whom the tumults and terrors rouse in various places, prove this.”

But since the apparitions of spirits after the death of a man are nothing more than mockeries of demons, as we showed earlier, nothing is able to be proved here.

Gregory the Great (if he himself is the author of the dialogue) (book 4 di-al. chapter 40) proves purgatory from the appearance of spirits. For he says that the spirit of Paschasius Diaconos, appeared a long time after death to the German Bishop Capuan in the hot bath corners, and when the German saw Paschasius, standing in the warm parts of the baths, he asked him what such a man was doing there. Truly he responded that he was therefore the deputy at that place of punishment, because in the schism of the Papacy, in the region of Laurentium he had stood against Symmachus. But he had added, “I beg you to entreat the Lord for me. And in this way you will know that you have been heard: if you return here, you will not find me.”

Likewise Gregory adds that the spirits of the dead located in a place of punishment are aided by holy communion, and he proves this in chapter 55 with the example of a certain Monachus returning after death.

Gregory has relayed all these things from others, and to this extent they are fabled: so they will at some time be admired by some in the church, because God expressly forbade in the Word, that we not seek truth from the dead (Is 8:19, Dt 18:11, and in the feast), This happened in Luke 16 [when the rich man was] seeking information for his brothers through the dead Lazarus. He was sent back to Moses and the prophets.

As often therefore as we read in Gregory (in the “History of the Lombardites” in the fictitious letters of Cyril the Jerusalemite and similar writings) that spirits appeared, complained of their torment, and sought freedom through the suffrage of Masses. So we ought often to lament the rather high misery of their condition, where men in matters of faith, having been misled with fables, believed in effective deceptions, because they didn’t want to have faith in the revealed truth.

p. 827

The divine law, however, always resounds in our ears: let him not be found among you the one who seeks truth from the dead (Dt 18:10). Concerning these things B Luther writes at length (in the book “Concerning Private Mass” tom. 2 Jenens. fol. 32) where, among other things, he adds these: “Let us with certain faith set up these three witnesses of Scripture in opposition to the Papistic specters; first, Moses saying that you shall not seek truth from the dead; next Isaiah, you should consult the law and the testimony rather than the dead; thirdly

Moses and Christ, they have Moses and the Prophets. Let them listen to them. Nor let us be moved by this great multitude of watchmen, apostles, forerunners, temples and altars, which have all been established above the replies of specters. For you see all these things are from lies of the devil, from miracles of false christs and false apostles (concerning which Christ predicted). You can count on the whole world being filled with dreadful idolatry, which clamors into heaven and speeds up the newest judgments of God with indescribable wrath etc.” These things says Luther.

Without doubt, some of the Romanists hold those apparitions of spirits for fables. But because they were fostering purgatory, without which their kitchens would freeze, they even retained them and increased with other tricks and snares. Such is that which Erasmus reports in his letters concerning a certain commissary, who was about to convince the people that spirits return. After nightfall, he secretly sent living crabs into the cemetery, with glowing wax fixed to their sides. When they crawled among the tombs, a terrible spectacle appeared at night, nor has anyone dared to come closer. Since all were truly astonished, the next day the commissary began to persuade the people that they were spirits of the dead demanding freedom from purgatory through masses.

These are those effective deceptions which the Apostle predicted in 2 Thessalonians 2 and reported among the signs of the antichrist. And therefore from the name of the Apostle those reports about specters rightly cause us doubt.

Case III

Concerning which causes are specters stirred and others disturbed?

p. 828

Response: After it has already been decided that all specters are the mockeries of demons, it is worth the effort to learn the causes of these kinds of mockeries. For once we know and avoid the causes, we will be rather free from their dangerous effects.

However many causes or starting points and occasions are able to be given: we will note such special ones.

I Specters love those places in which false religion thrives and superstitious worship, which the devil favors with his shadows, is preferred among them, who freely seek truth from the dead. Therefore after the darkness of errors has been scattered, how the light of truth begins to dawn and specters cease, because no more of them are used. In the same way, in turn, in the papacy, where purgatory is founded through specters, there is a great number of them. In those places, however, where the doctrine of the Gospel resounds purely, they are thus no more stirred, for the devil is cast out through the Word, just as it also happened in the early church. In Judea the exorcists were no more able to exercise their magic arts, when Christ began to preach the Gospel (Luke 11). In Samaria that great power of Simon Magus vanished when Philip announced the Gospel there (Acts 8). In Philippi, when Paul teaches, the python spirit is cast out (Acts 16). Likewise when he preaches the Word to the Ephesians, they bade secret arts farewell, and burned their magic books (Acts 19).

Thus the memories of our Fathers have been monasteries of the Papacy, filled with specters and illusions of demons. Now, where there are reformations through the doctrine of the Gospel, there is less abundance of specters. Therefore, if someone wants to be immune from the illusions of demons, let him flee the doctrines of demons.

2. Specters love solitary and uninhabited places, as are citadels, temples, mountains, forests, where men are rarely seen. "For there beasts live, the houses are filled with snakes, and ostriches live there, and hairy things dance, and tawny owls and Sirens respond

p. 829

(Isaiah 13:21-22). It has even been found, that that place, which had first been inhabited by men, was freed by specters.

3. Specters vex children who are stiffnecked and unjust towards parents. Of this Alexander gives an example (from Alexander bk 5 genial. dier. chapter 18) concerning a certain youth, who lived with perverse and impolite behavior. With contempt for God for a long time, he spoke insults and intolerable abuses against his parents, and with spells and curses, he departed because he was driven by these things. A foul demon of horrible appearance appeared to him on the road. He shouted and resisted. But the demon pursued him with hostile hands, as if about to seize him. That miserable one almost recognizing the certain demon in disguise, seized him with his hand and asked him how much he was able [to do], lest he allow himself to be taken hold of. Many times he called on the divine name. At last he was barely able to repel the demon. Having repelled the demon, the youth, having been received into the house of a certain man, often stuck to the disguise or the clothing of the man, and such lethargy entered him that he was not in possession of himself. His mind had been overcome, since it seemed altogether best to him to be represented and to live before the eyes of others in that appearance.

Suetonius writes concerning Nero that after he killed his mother Agrippa, vexing spirits attended him everywhere. "Never, writes Suetonius, was he able to carry a conscience of wickedness. He often confessed that he was continually disturbed by the sight of his mother, even with words of fury and burning torches."

4. They discover similar cruelty of specters, who are famous on account of cruelty and tyranny, which they exercised against the innocent. Xiphilinus in Dione speaks of this concerning Nero, that before his barbaric death in the curia, a murmur with much laughter and an uproar in the theater accompanied by much weeping happened. This was heard although there were no men there. And Suetonius tells concerning Ceasar Caligula that before he was buried, the keepers of the gardens were disturbed by shadows of witches, truly in the house in which he lay dead, there was no night without some terror having been performed.

p. 830

5. There are also certain places infested by specters on account of the evils of the ones living there. John Diacon (in the life of B. Gregory bk 4 chapter 93) writes of this concerning a Barbilian farm, which a demon vexed on account of the evils of most of the inhabitants. This demon was in the form of a ferocious bull. Sometimes he pursued and fatigued sheep. Other times he caused serious troubles for the keepers of the flocks and herds, so that even certain ones of them on account of the troubles have been compelled just to move. In many households constant **commessiones**, **scortationes**, and other foul deeds happened. It is not surprising if the foul spirit vexed them, is it?

6. Nor are examples lacking where certain places have been infested by specters, in a place, because there had been certain corpses left unburied there. Of this thing Pliny the younger writes an example (book 7 letter 22) concerning a certain household of Athens where an enormous thin

ghost was filling, with rattling of chains, with which he seemed to have been bound. This was without doubt a diabolical specter, which although after the burial of the corpse in a plot, they found it in the house no more. Now a disturbance didn't always happen to such a degree. Rather he wanted to confirm the superstition of men.

Augustine tells other things (in the book "Concerning Care for the Dead" chapter 10) that several dead bodies, either in sleep or in some other way, have appeared to the living, and, after they showed the places, they warned the unknowing where their unburied bodies lay, so that the burial, which had been lacking, may be offered for them.

Thyraeus gives examples of this kind (part 3 "Concerning Infested Places" heading 86 th 20, and Bozius in book 15 "Concerning Signs of the Church" chapter 6) concerning Gamaliel who sought an honest burial from Lucius, who was the Elder before him; and Stephanus the protomartyr; and Nicodemus. He gives an example concerning Barnabas, who was vexed three times by this name: Bishop Anthemius Salaminus. He gives an example concerning the Prophet Zecharia, who was vexed by Calamerius. He gives an example concerning Thyrsus, who with 41 martyrs was annoyed by the same thing from the Beautiful Augusta, sister of Emperor Theodosius.

Concerning these and similar examples Augustine writes a book concerning angelic works. "I believe that it happened, whether it was allowed from above, or

p. 831

commanded, that they appear in dreams to say something concerning burying their bodies. This occurred although they didn't know thoroughly whose bodies they are. It, however, sometimes happens profitably, whether some kind of consolation of the living, to whom those dead pertain, whose images appear to the sleeping; or so that the courtesy of a burial may be given to the human family with these warnings. That, which is allowed the dead, doesn't help. But the blaming with impiety is ignored.

These are the particular causes why specters make a commotion, the consideration of which ought to rouse us to true piety and a pure and holy life. For Satan has no control over those who truly live in fear of God; and they rely on Him, and at last don't obey the will and enticement of the devil. "He who fears God will not be afraid nor frightened, since He is his hope" Sirach 34:16.

Case IV

In what way is the spirit of a pious man able to fortify and rouse himself against the illusions and commotions of specters?

Response: First of all let us here look back to God, without whose permission the devil is not able to aim the javelin at us. For the power of the devil is certainly great. But it is under the omnipotence of God, by which he is bound and confined, as an untamed horse by a bridle.

God, however, permits the devil that wickedness of duping men, partly on account of the impious, partly on account of the pious.

The impious are plenty secure. They don't fear the power of the devil. Many also don't believe the power of the devil. It repeatedly happens to these people—that which is written in Psalm 109:6 "Let a devil stand at his right hand." For those who don't want to hear God and his

ministers in the Word, God hurls evil spirits of Satan at them, which the unwilling ones are forced to see and hear.

The pious ones are induced for this reason:

p. 832

for the consideration of the divine and angelic protection against the tricks of Satan. For we never understand more than we are dear to God and the holy angels, or more than that, although the evil angels may vex us, nevertheless they are not also able to hurt us, because the Lord is placing his hand under us.

Therefore let us be firmly strengthened by this shield, that specters have no control over us, unless the Lord allows. When he, however, does allow it, he exercises our piety in the praying for zeal, and he lavishes strength lest we succumb in this trial.

Secondly let us consider, that illusions of specters have even tested holy men just as in the first place our examples testify of Gregory, Antonius, and Luther. Nor, however, in this case does anything of their devotion or love wane, where God, having embraced them, was present. Similarly what happened to them and us, let us not think of as a sign of the wrath of God, rather it is a trial, with which he wants to lead us into a battle line and to test our faith and endurance in battle with the devil. We, however, are no better than our fathers.

Thirdly, we arouse the presence of the Son of God, who lives in the hearts of the pious through faith (Eph 3). He is stronger than all devils, and “he appeared for this, that he may destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn 3). He has already subdued the devil and crushed his head (Gen 3, Jn 14). He drove him out from the ones he possessed, and is also able to cast him out from the dwellings of the faithful. He is in their midst. “He is at our right hand, we will not be shaken” (Ps. 16).

Therefore just as the citizens of Antioch were crying out against the enemy for themselves in a certain great riot, “Leave, and take troubles with you!” thus also in tricks of this kind, let us speak in response to Satan, “Stand, men! Christ is with us, Immanuel, the fiery wall around us.” “Look, the Lord, my helper. Who is the one who will condemn me?” (Is. 50:9).

We add in the fourth place a firm faith in God the Father, who on account of his Son our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we believe, did not hand us over to the power of Satan,

p. 833

but protected us, so that nothing would separate us from the grace of Christ. “For he sealed us on his hand” (Is 49). If the camp makes a stand against us, our heart will not be afraid. This is the shield of faith, concerning which Paul speaks in Ephesians 6 “in which we are able to extinguish all fiery arrows of the most depraved spirit.”

Fifthly, hearts burning from faith rise toward God, so that he crushes Satan under our feet. For “the prayer of the just avails much” (James 5). And as Macarius says, “If demons equal in strength to solid mountains happen, they will be consumed nevertheless by our prayer just as burning wax.”

Sixthly, since the Word, which is “the sword of the Holy Spirit” (Eph 6), is joined with prayers, let us take hold of the words of Scripture, with which the diminished and crumbled power of the devil is taught through Christ, so that, “The seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent.” With this passage a certain miner from Friberg drove a devilish specter from

himself. Likewise, “The Son of Man came, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn. 3). “The prince of this world came, and he has no hold on me” (Jn 14:30). “Be confident, I have conquered the world” (Jn 16:33) And similar passages.... For the devil flees the Word of God, through which he learns daily that his kingdom has been destroyed. Here Luther writes (in his “Church Postil”): “Such spooking of the spirits you should freely and joyfully throw into the wind and not be afraid of them. In this way they will also leave you be in peace. And if it is that you ever have a Polter- or a Miner-ghost in your house, then don’t have much discussion with it, but know that it is not a good ghost and it doesn’t come from God. Take only faith to heart. If God allows it to vex you, just like pious Job, then be prepared and suffer it willingly. But if it is his own playing, then scorn him with strong faith and merely think about God’s Word anew, for it will never bite off God’s Word for you. Of this have no doubt!

Seventhly, it must be settled in the divine calling, which each has in his station. For whoever has a legitimate calling for accomplishing something,

p. 834

even if the places are infested and he is in the middle of laboring demons, he is nevertheless able to be safe, because “God ordered his angels concerning you, that they guard you in all your ways, and may they carry you with their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone” (Ps 91).

Therefore a legitimate calling is great consolation in all troubles. Sirach writes of this (chapter 10, 31st) “In troubles let your spirit be strong and rest on your calling. For who will help it, who despairs in his calling?” For divine protection always follows a lawful calling.

Thus Luther often drove away demons by his calling. “I know,” he said to the devil, “that God wanted me to be master in this house. If you have a more certain calling, alright! Stay here. But I know that you are not master of this house. But the abyss has been prepared for you, etc.”

Eighthly, let the protection of the angels comfort us, by which the Most High blockades those, just as it is written, “The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him (Ps 34).” Of which also the histories of Elisha (in 2 Kings 6), the three boys in the furnace in Babylon (Dan 3), and Daniel in the pit of lions (Dan 6) testify.

Ninthly, the forgiveness of sins, which we obtain through Christ, runs to help us. For with whom sins are forgiven, they are blessed, and in favor with God, in whom there is no condemnation, so then neither does the devil have any control over them. In agreement with this B Martinus drove the devil away from himself, although a horrible specter stood near this struggling man, he powerfully addressed it, “Why are you standing there, horrible beast? You have no control over me.”

It is right, **in the tenth place**, to have a truly penitent spirit and a good conscience, lest our sins accuse us. “For if our heart doesn’t condemn us, then at last we have access to God” (1 Jn 3). Then we will also powerfully be able to fight with the devil and flee him. Truly an evil conscience makes people timid (Wisdom 17). And where one watches diligently by day for works of the devil, there the devilish specters are in confusion by night.

Eleventhly, those who

p. 835

try to be immune from specters, let them flee solitary locations and melancholy sadness. For in wastelands the Satyrs dance, and the melancholy head is the bathroom of Satan. We have reminded of this thing more than enough.

Therefore let us conceal sadness as long as it is able to be done, lest Satan notice it. He is unable to investigate carefully the inner things of the heart, "because God alone knows the heart of the sons of man" (1 Kings 8).

Twelfthly, let no one be eager to see or hear specters, as some unruly and reckless people are accustomed. Satan easily hearkens to these things, but much to their danger, thus, that later he exceedingly makes them regret their impious desire.

Thirteenthly, let no one pretend that he is a specter. For this impious game is displeasing to God. Therefore he either permits the power of the devil against reckless men of this kind, or in other men, so that, although they arm themselves by the hand and oppose counterfeit specters of this kind, the specters butcher them.

Finally, let no one without calling attack Satanic spirits with rash boldness. They will not conquer without God.

The Philosopher Athenodorus inhabited an infested home in Athens, in which no one wanted to dwell, and with his magnanimity he drove out a specter, as it is in the writings of Pliny (book 7 letter 27). But he didn't do this through any lightness, rather by pointing out the place of civil office where the specter, which he was following, perished. When he dug it up, he found bones having been thrust into chains and having been entangled. He was solemnly buried in these. And afterwards the specter left the home.

Gregory entered a certain infested home, and he freed it from the demon with his prayers (referring to John the Deacon in the "Life of Gregory" book 4 chapter 13).

But many things are truly audacious, as when they try to play with specters or to cast them out with fearful things and curses, but with great mischief. For the devil doesn't fall with fearful and defaming things, but with prayers and the Word drawn from a pure conscience.

To these mediators of chasing away specters, some add frequent invocation of the saints and above all one's own angel, to whom everyone

p. 836

has been entrusted from the place of his birth. "For his," they affirm, "is the duty, that he may be a protection for the living against the powers of the dead," as Peter Thyraeus says (part 3 "Concerning Infested Places" chapter 90).

But that neither holy men nor angels must be invoked, we pointed out above (book 2 chapter 7 case 1).

Also it is thus far uncertain whether anyone has his own angel, with the purpose of guarding him. The pious have a whole army of angels, who protect them from the power of demons. Therefore they must not be invoked by us. God, however, must be called upon, that he may keep us immune from the power of Satan and the terror of specters.

Therefore let us be content with these means, which we just now indicated, and thus with the highest help either we will be entirely immune from specters or their appearance will be tolerable for us.

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