

heat is so made subtle that, as from the driest wood riseth the clearest flame, and from the lees of wine is distilled a strong and burning aqua vitae, in like sort their spirits, both from the dryness of the matter, and straining of the gross substance from which they pass, receiving a pureness, are instruments of such sharpness, which is the dry light that Heraclitus approved. To this, other reasons may be added, as: exercise of their wits, wherein they be indefatigable, which maketh them seem to have that of a natural readiness which custom of exercise, and use hath found in them. Moreover, while their passions be not yet vehement, whereby they might be overcarried, melancholy breedeth a jealousy of doubt in that they take in deliberation, and causeth them to be the more exact and curious in pondering the very moments of things. To these reasons may be added the vehemency of their affections once raised: which carrieth them, with all their faculties thereto belonging, into the depth of that they take pleasure to inter-meddle in. For though the melancholy man be not so easily affected with any other passion as with those of fear, sadness, and jealousy, yet being once thoroughly heat with a contrary passion, retaineth the fervency thereof far longer time than any other complexion, and more fervently boileth therewith, by reason his heart and spirit hath more solidity of substance to entertain deeply the passion, which in a more rare and thin sooner vanisheth away. Thus greediness of desire in those things which they affect maketh them diligent and painful, wary and circumspect, and so in actions of brain and sense not inferior to the best tempers; as also it maketh them stiff in opinion. Their resolution riseth of long deliberation, because of doubt and distrust which, as it is not easily bred, so it is also hard to remove. Such persons are doubtful, suspicious, and thereby long in deliberation, because those domestical fears, or that internal obscurity, causeth an opinion of danger in outward affairs where there is no cause of doubt. Their dreams are fearful, partly by reason of their fancy, waking, is most occupied about fears and terrors, which retaineth the impression in sleep; and partly through black and dark fumes of melancholy rising up to the brain, whereof the fantasy forgeth objects, and disturbeth the sleep of melancholy persons. * * *

DEMONOLOGY

LEWES LAVATER: Of Ghosts and Spirits Walking by Night †

Melancholic persons and mad men imagine many things which in very deed are not.

There have been very many in all ages which have utterly denied that there be any spirits or strange sights. The philosophers of Epicurus's sect did jest and laugh at all those things which were reported of them, and counted them as feigned and counterfeit, by the which only children and fools and plain simple men were made afraid. * * * True it is that many men do sadly¹ persuade themselves that they see or hear ghosts: for that which they imagine they see or hear proceedeth either of melancholy, madness, weakness of the senses, fear, or of some other perturbation; or else when they see or hear beasts, vapors, or some other natural things, then they vainly suppose they have seen sights I wot not what. * * *

There is no doubt but that almost all those things which the common people judge to be wonderful sights are nothing less than so.² But in the mean season it can not be denied but that strange sights, and many other such like things, are sometimes heard and also seen.

And first it can not be denied but that some men which, either by dispositions of nature or for that³ they have sustained great misery, are now become heavy and full of melancholy, imagine many times with themselves, being alone, miraculous and strange things. Sometimes they affirm in great sooth that they verily hear and see this or that thing, which not withstanding neither they nor yet any other man did once see or hear: which thing we sometimes see by experience to be true in those men which be troubled with great headaches or subject to other diseases of the body, or cannot take rest in the night, or are distraughted of their wits. Those which dwell with such kind of men, when they hear them tell such absurd tales, such strange things, and such marvelous visions, albeit they pity their unfortunate estate, yet can they not many times contain themselves from laughing. * * *

¹ Translated into English by "R. H.," London, 1572.

² 2. The extracts here printed are from 1.2 (pp. 2-10), 2.2 (pp. 102-9), 2.4 (p. 114), 2.13 (pp. 159-61), and 2.15 (p. 163).

1. Seriously.

2. I.e., delusions.

3. Because.

The Papists' doctrine touching the souls of dead men, and the appearing of them.

The papists in former times have publicly both taught and written that those spirits which men sometime see and hear be either good or bad angels, or else the souls of those which either live in everlasting bliss, or in purgatory, or in the place of damned persons; and that divers of them are those souls that crave aid and deliverance of men. * * *

Of this place, to wit, purgatory, popish writers teach marvelous things. Some of them say that purgatory is also under the earth as hell is. Some say that hell and purgatory are both one place, albeit the pains be divers according to the deserts of souls. * * * Some of them say that the pain of purgatory is all one with the punishment of hell, and that they differ only in this, that the one hath an end, the other no end: and that it is far more easy to endure all the pains of this world which all men since Adam's time have sustained, even unto the day of the last judgment, than to bear one day's space the least of those two punishments. * * *

Hereunto they add that the spirits, as well of the good as the ill, do come and are sent unto men living, from hell; and that by the common law of justice, all men at the day of judgment shall come to their trial from hell; and that none before that time can come from thence. Farther they teach that by God's license and dispensation, certain, yea before the day of judgment, are permitted to come out of hell, and that not forever, but only for a season, for the instructing and terrifying of the living. * * *

But as concerning the time and place when and where spirits do prof-fer themselves to be seen, they say no certain rule can be given, for this standeth wholly in God's pleasure, who if he list to deliver any, suffereth him to make his appearance forthwith even in such places as he may be well heard in. And that spirits do not always appear under a visible shape, but sometimes invisibly, insomuch that sometimes nothing else is heard of them but sneezing, spitting, sighing, and clapping of hands. etc. * * * And whosoever these spirits be, they say that they endure punishment. Besides that souls do not appear nor answer unto every man's interrogatories, but that of a great number they scantily appear unto one. And therefore they teach whensoever such visions of spirits are showed, men should use fasting and prayer or ever they demand any question of them.

* * * Besides this, shrift and massing⁴ should be used ere we question with them: farther, that we should not give credit as soon as we hear but one sign, but await to hear the same thrice repeated, which in the first book of Samuel and third chapter is read to have been done by Samuel being yet a child: for otherwise the diel may delude and deceive us, as he doth very often. * * *

4. Saving of masses.

* * * This [the use of some form of prayer] done, we should, as they teach, fall to questioning with them, and say: "Thou spirit, we beseech thee by Christ Jesus, tell us what thou art, and if there be any amongst us to whom thou wouldst gladly make answer, name him, or by some sign declare so much." After this, the question is to be moved, each man there present being recited,⁵ whether he would answer unto this or that man. And if at the name of any he speak, or make a noise, all other demands remaining should be made unto him, as these and such like: What man's soul he is? For what cause he is come, and what he doth desire? Whether he require any aid by prayers and suffrages? Whether by massing or alms-giving he may be released? * * *

Moreover, popish writers teach us to discern good spirits from evil by four means. First, they say that if he be a good spirit, he will at the beginning somewhat terrify men, but again soon revive and comfort them. * * * Their second note is to descry them by their outward and visible shape. For if they appear under the form of a lion, bear, dog, toad, serpent, cat, or black ghost, it may easily be gathered that it is an evil spirit. And that, on the other side, good spirits do appear under the shape of a dove, a man, a lamb, or in the brightness and clear light of the sun.

We must also consider whether the voice which we hear be sweet, lowly, sober, and sorrowful, or otherwise terrible and full of reproach, for so they term it.

Thirdly, we must note whether the spirit teach ought that doth vary from the doctrine of the apostles, and other doctors approved by the church's censure; or whether he utter anything that doth dissent from the faith, good manners, and ceremonies of the church, according to the canonical rites or decrees of councils, and against the laws of the holy Church of Rome.

Fourthly, we must take diligent heed whether in his words, deeds, and gestures, he do show forth any humility, acknowledging or confessing of his sins and punishments, or whether we hear of him any groaning, weeping, complaint, boasting, threatening, slander or blasphemy. For as the beggar doth rehearse his own misery, so likewise do good spirits that desire any help or deliverance. * * *

Testimonies out of the word of God that neither the souls of the faithful nor of infidels do walk upon the earth after they are once parted from their bodies.

Now, that the souls neither of the faithful nor of infidels do wander any longer on the earth when they be once severed from the bodies, I will make it plain and evident unto you by these reasons following. First,

5. Called by name.

certain it is that such as depart hence either die in faith or in unbelief. Touching those that go hence in a right belief, their souls are by and by in possession of life everlasting; and they that depart in unbelief do straightway become partakers of eternal damnation. The souls do not vanish away and die with the body, as the Epicures' opinion is, neither yet be in every place, as some do imagine. * * *

What those things are which men see and hear: and first, that good angels do sometimes appear.

But thou wilt say, "I do not yet clearly and plainly understand what manner of things those are whereof * * * historiographers, holy fathers, and others make mention: as that holy apostles, bishops, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and many other which died long ago, appeared unto certain men lying at the point of death, gave them warning, answered unto certain questions, commanded them to do this or that thing. * * *" You will say, "I hear and understand very well that these things are not men's souls, which continually remain in their appointed places. I pray you, then, what are they?" To conclude in few words: If it be not a vain persuasion proceeding through weakness of the senses, through fear, or some such like cause, or if it be not deceit of men, or some natural thing * * * it is either a good or evil angel, or some other forewarning sent by God. * * * For as servants stand before their masters to fulfill their commandments, even so are the angels pressed and ready to serve God. Isaiah the 63[9]: "The angel of his face," that is, which standeth ready in his sight, "preserved them." And further, they which often stand in presence of their lords are acceptable unto them, and privy to their secrets. Out of this place of Matthew [18:10], Saint Jerome in his commentaries, and other fathers do conclude that God doth assign unto every soul as soon as he createth him his peculiar angel, which taketh care of him. But whether that everyone of the elect have his proper angel, or many angels be appointed unto him, it is not expressly set forth, yet this is most sure and certain, that God hath given his angels in charge to have regard and care over us.

That sometimes, yea and for the most part, evil angels do appear.

Contrariwise, evil angels are hurtful and enemies unto men; they follow them everywhere, to the end they may withdraw them from true worshipping of God, and from faith in his only son, Jesus Christ, unto sundry other things. These appear in divers shapes: for if the devil, as Paul doth witness, transformed himself into an angel of light, no less may he take the shape of a prophet, an apostle, evangelist, bishop, and martyr, and appear in their likeness; or so bewitch us, that we verily suppose we hear or see them in very deed. He taketh on him to tell of

things to come, whether he hit them right or wrong. He affirmeth that he is this or that soul, that he may be delivered by this or that means, that by these means he may purchase credit and authority unto those things which have no ground of scripture.

G. GIFFORD: A Discourse of the Subtle Practices of Devils by Witches and Sorcerers †

Devils have no power to hurt men's bodies or goods, but upon special leave given unto them.

The reprobate angels are mighty, fierce and subtle. * * * They be instruments of God's vengeance, and executioners of his wrath. They do not exercise power and authority which is absolute, and at their own will and appointment, but so far as God leteth forth the chain to give them scope. Touching the reprobate,¹ which despise the ways of God and are disobedient, we are taught that God in righteous vengeance giveth them over into their² hands, for they would not love his laws, nor honor him as their God. Therefore they come under the tyranny of wicked devils, which work in them with power; their hearts do they harden; their eyes, even the eyes of their minds, do they blind; they kindle and stir up in them all filthy lusts, and carry them headlong into foul and abominable sins.

THE NATURE OF MAN

PETER DE LA PRIMAUDAYE: The French Academy ‡

Of Man

ASER. When I direct my flight now and then, my companions, even unto the heavens, and with the wings of contemplation behold their wonderful greatness; their terrible motions, being contrary and without ceasing; the living brightness, rare beauty, and incomparable force of the sun and moon; their unchangeable course, one while cause of light, and by and by after of darkness; the infinite number of goodly stars, and of so many other celestial signs: and from this excellent and constant order of all these things, as one ravished and amazed, when I withdraw my spirit lower into the elementary region, to admire and wonder at the

† London, 1587; this extract appears on sig. D2.

‡ Translated by "T. B. C.," London, 1594. This

extract is from l. 1 (pp. 9-17).

1. I.e., reprobate humans.

2. I.e., of the reprobate angels.