

# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## THE FIRST PART

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### THE FIRST PART TREATING OF THE THREE NECESSARY CONCOMITANTS OF WITCHCRAFT, WHICH ARE THE DEVIL, A WITCH, AND THE PERMISSION OF ALMIGHTY GOD

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#### [Question I](#)

*Whether the Belief that there are such Beings as Witches is so Essential a Part of the Catholic Faith that Obstinacy to maintain the Opposite Opinion manifestly savours of Heresy.*

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#### [Question II](#)

*If it be in Accordance with the Catholic Faith to maintain that in Order to bring about some Effect of Magic, the Devil must intimately co-operate with the Witch, or whether one without the other, that is to say, the Devil without the Witch, or conversely, could produce such an Effect.*

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#### [Question III](#)

*Whether Children can be Generated by Incubi and Succubi.*

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#### [Question IV](#)

*By which Devils are the Operations of Incubus and Succubus Practised?*

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*What is the Source of the Increase of Works of Witchcraft? Whence comes it that the Practice of Witchcraft hath so notably increased?*

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[Question XI](#)

*That Witches who are Midwives in Various Ways Kill the Child Conceived in the Womb, and Procure an Abortion; or if they do not this Offer New-born Children to Devils.*

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[Question XII](#)

*Whether the Permission of Almighty God is an Accompaniment of Witchcraft.*

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[Question XIII](#)

*Herein is set forth the Question, concerning the Two Divine Permissions which God justly allows, namely, that the Devil, the Author or all Evil, should Sin, and that our First Parents should Fall, from which Origins the Works of Witches are justly suffered to take place.*

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## *Solutions of the Arguments.*

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[Question XIV](#)

*The Enormity of Witches is Considered, and it is shown that the Whole Matter should be rightly Set Forth and Declared.*

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[Question XV](#)

*It is Shown that, on Account of the Sins of Witches, the Innocent are often Bewitched, yea, Sometimes even for their Own Sins.*

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[Question XVI](#)

*The Foregoing Truths are Set out in Particular, this by a Comparison of the Works of Witches with Other Baleful Superstitions.*

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[Question XVII](#)

*A Comparison of their Crimes under Fourteen Heads, with the Sins of the Devils of all and every Kind.*

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[Question XVIII](#)

*Here follows the Method of Preaching against and Controverting Five Arguments of Laymen and Lewd Folk, which seem to be Variously Approved, that God does not Allow so Great Power to the Devil and Witches as is involved in the Performance of such Mighty Works of Witchcraft.*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## THE FIRST PART TREATING OF THE THREE NECESSARY CONCOMITANTS OF WITCHCRAFT, WHICH ARE THE DEVIL, A WITCH, AND THE PERMISSION OF ALMIGHTY GOD

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### *PART I. QUESTION I.*

*Here beginneth auspiciously the first part  
of this work. Question the First.*

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Whether the belief that there are such beings as witches is so essential a part of the Catholic faith that obstinately to maintain the opposite opinion manifestly savours of heresy. And it is argued that a firm belief in witches is not a Catholic doctrine: see chapter 26, question 5, of the work of Episcopus. Whoever believes that any creature can be changed for the better or the worse, or transformed into another kind or likeness, except by the Creator of all things, is worse than a pagan and a heretic. And so when they report such things are done by witches it is not Catholic, but plainly heretical, to maintain this opinion.

Moreover, no operation of witchcraft has a permanent effect among us. And this is the proof thereof: For if it were so, it would be effected by the operation of demons. But to maintain that the devil has power to change human bodies or to do them permanent harm does not seem in accordance with the teaching of the Church. For in this way they could destroy the whole world, and bring it to utter confusion.

Moreover, every alteration that takes place in a human body - for example, a state of health or a state of sickness - can be brought down to a question of natural causes, as Aristotle has shown in his 7th book of *Physics*. And the greatest of these is the influence of the stars. But the devils cannot interfere with the stars. This is the opinion of Dionysius in his epistle to S. Polycarp. For this alone God can do. Therefore it is evident the demons cannot actually effect any permanent transformation in human bodies; that is to say, no real metamorphosis. And so we must refer the appearance of any such change to some dark and occult cause.

And the power of God is stronger than the power of the devil, so divine works are more true than demoniac operations. Whence inasmuch as evil is powerful in the world, then it must be the work of the devil always conflicting with the work of God. Therefore as it is unlawful to hold that the devil's evil craft can apparently exceed the work of God, so it is unlawful to believe that the noblest works of creation, that is to say, man and beast, can be harmed and spoiled by the power of the devil.

Moreover, that which is under the influence of a material object cannot have power over corporeal objects. But devils are subservient to certain influences of the stars, because magicians observe the course of certain stars in order to evoke the devils. Therefore they have not the power

of effecting any change in a corporeal object, and it follows that witches have even less power than the demons possess.

For devils have no power at all save by a certain subtle art. But an art cannot permanently produce a true form. (And a certain author says: Writers on Alchemy know that there is no hope of any real transmutation.) Therefore the devils for their part, making use of the utmost of their craft, cannot bring about any permanent cure - or permanent disease. But if these states exist it is in truth owing to some other cause, which may be unknown, and has nothing to do with the operations of either devils or witches.

But according to the Decretals (33) the contrary is the case. "If by witchcraft or any magic art permitted by the secret but most just will of God, and aided by the power of the devil, etc . . . ." The reference here is to any act of witchcraft which may hinder the end of marriage, and for this impediment to take effect three things can concur, that is to say, witchcraft, the devil, and the permission of God. Moreover, the stronger can influence that which is less strong. But the power of the devil is stronger than any human power (*Job xl*). There is no power upon earth which can be compared to him, who was created so that he fears none.

*Answer.* Here are three heretical errors which must be met, and when they have been disproved the truth will be plain. For certain writers, pretending to base their opinion upon the words of S. Thomas (iv, 24) when he treats of impediments brought about by magic charms, have tried to maintain that there is not such a thing as magic, that it only exists in the imagination of those men who ascribe natural effects, the cause whereof are not known, to witchcraft and spells. There are others who acknowledge indeed that witches exist, but they declare that the influence of magic and the effects of charms are purely imaginary and phantasmical. A third class of writers maintain that the effects said to be wrought by magic spells are altogether illusory and fanciful, although it may be that the devil does really lend his aid to some witch.

The errors held by each one of these persons may thus be set forth and thus confuted. For in the very first place they are shown to be plainly heretical by many orthodox writers, and especially by S. Thomas, who lays down that such an opinion is altogether contrary to the authority of the saints and is founded upon absolute infidelity. Because the authority of the Holy Scriptures says that devils have power over the bodies and over the minds of men, when God allows them to exercise this power, as is plain from very many passages in the Holy Scriptures. Therefore those err who say that there is no such thing as witchcraft, but that it is purely imaginary, even although they do not believe that devils exist except in the imagination of the ignorant and vulgar, and the natural accidents which happen to a man he wrongly attributes to some supposed devil. For the imagination of some men is so vivid that they think they see actual figures and appearances which are but the reflection of their thoughts, and then these are believed to be the apparitions of evil spirits or even the spectres of witches. But this is contrary to the true faith, which teaches us that certain angels fell from heaven and are now devils, and we are bound to acknowledge that by their very nature they can do many wonderful things which we cannot do. And those who try to induce others to perform such evil wonders are called witches. And because infidelity in a person who has been baptized is technically called heresy, therefore such persons are plainly heretics.

As regards those who hold the other two errors, those, that is to say, who do not deny that there are demons and that demons possess a natural power, but who differ among themselves concerning the possible effects of magic and the possible operations of witches: the one school holding that a witch can truly bring about certain effects, yet these effects are not real but phantastical, the other school allowing that some real harm does befall the person or persons injured, but that when a witch imagines this damage is the effect of her arts she is grossly

deceived. This error seems to be based upon two passages from the Canons where certain women are condemned who falsely imagine that during the night they ride abroad with [Diana or Herodias](#). This may read in the Canon. Yet because such things often happen by illusion are merely in the imagination, those who suppose that all the effects of witchcraft are mere illusion and imagination are very greatly deceived. Secondly, with regard to a man who believes or maintains that a creature can be made, or changed for better or for worse, or transformed into some other kind or likeness by anyone save by God, the Creator of all things, alone, is an infidel and worse than a heathen. Wherefore on account of these words “changed for the worse” they say that such an effect if wrought by witchcraft cannot be real but must be purely phantastical.

But inasmuch as these errors savour of heresy and contradict the obvious meaning of the Canon, we will first prove our points by the divine law, as also by ecclesiastical and civil law, and first in general.

To commence, the expressions of the Canon must be treated of in detail (although the sense of the Canon will be even more clearly elucidated in the following question). For the divine in many places commands that witches are not only to be avoided, but also they are to be put to death, and it would not impose the extreme penalty of this kind if witches did not really and truly make a compact with devils in order to bring about real and true hurts and harms. For the penalty of death is not inflicted except for some grave and notorious crime, but it is otherwise with death of the soul, which can be brought about by the power of a phantastical illusion or even by the stress of temptation. This is the opinion of S. Thomas when he discusses whether it be evil to make use of the help of devils (ii. 7). For in the 18th chapter of *Deuteronomy* it is commanded that all wizards and charmers are to be destroyed. Also the 19th chapter of *Leviticus* says: The soul which goeth to wizards and soothsayers to commit fornication with them, I will set my face against that soul, and destroy it out of the midst of my people. And again, 20: A man, or woman, in whom there is a pythical or divining spirit dying, let them die: they shall stone them. Those persons are said to be pythons in whom the devil works extraordinary things.

Moreover, this must be borne in mind, that on account of this sin Ochozias fell sick and died, IV. *Kings I*. Also Saul, I *Paralipomenon*, 10. We have, moreover, the weighty opinions of the Fathers who have written upon the scriptures and who have treated at length of the power of demons and of magic arts. The writings of many doctors upon Book 2 of the Sentences may be consulted, and it will be found that they all agree, that there are wizards and sorcerers who by the power of the devil can produce real and extraordinary effects, and these effects are not imaginary, and God permits this to be. I will not mention those very many other places where S. Thomas in great detail discusses operations of this kind. As, for example, in his *Summa contra Gentiles*, Book 3, c. 1 and 2, in part one, question 114, argument 4. And in the *Second of the Second*, questions 92 and 94. We may further consult the Commentators and the Exegetes who have written upon the wise men and the magicians of Pharaoh, *Exodus* vii. We may also consult what S. Augustine says in *The City of God*, Book 18, c. 17. See further his second book *On Christian Doctrine*. Very many other doctors advance the same opinion, and it would be the height of folly for any man to contradict all these, and he could not be held to be clear of the guilt of heresy. For any man who gravely errs in an exposition of Holy Scripture is rightly considered to be a heretic. And whosoever thinks otherwise concerning these matters which touch the faith that the Holy Roman Church holds is a heretic. There is the Faith.

## [Question I continued . . .](#)

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*“Diana or Herodias.” This decree, which was often attributed to a General Council of Ancyra, but which is now held to be of a later date, was in any case authoritative, since it passed into the “De ecclesiasticis disciplinis” ascribed to Regino of Prum (906), and thence to the canonists S. Ivo of Chartres and Johannes Gratian. Section 364 of the Benedictine Abbot's work relates that “certain abandoned women turning aside to follow Satan, being seduced by the illusions and phantasms of demons, believe and openly profess that in the dead of night they ride upon certain beasts with the pagan goddess Dianan and a countless horde of women, and that in these silent hours they fly over vast tracks of country and obey her as their mistress, while on other nights they are sullen to pay her homage.” John of Salisbury, who died in 1180, in his “Policraticus,” I, xvii, speaks of the popular belief in a witch-queen named Herodias, who called together the sorcerers to meeting at night. In a MS., “De Sortilegis,” the following passage occurs: “We next inquire concerning certain wicked crones who believe and profess that in the night-time they ride abroad with Diana, the heathen goddess, or else with Herodias, and an innumerable host of women, upon certain beasts, and that in a silent covey at the dead of night they pass over immense distances, obeying her commands as their mistress, and that they are summoned by her on appointed nights, and they declare that they have the power to change human beings for better or for worse, ay, even to turn them into some other semblance or shape. Concerning such women I answer according to the decrees of the Council of Alexandria, that the minds of the faithful are disordered by such fantasies owing to the inspiration of no good spirit but of the devil.”*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION I. CONTINUED . . . .*

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That to deny the existence of witches is contrary to the obvious sense of the Canon is shown by ecclesiastical law. For we have the opinions of the commentators on the Canon which commences: If anyone by magic arts or witchcraft . . . And again, there are those writers who speak of men impotent and bewitched, and therefore by this impediment brought about by witchcraft they are unable to copulate, and so the contract of marriage is rendered void and matrimony in their cases has become impossible. For they say, and S. Thomas agrees with them, that if witchcraft takes effect in the event of a marriage before there has been carnal copulation, then if it is lasting it annuls and destroys the contract of marriage, and it is quite plain that such a condition cannot in any way be said to be illusory and the effect of imagination.

Upon this point see what [Blessed Henry of Segusio](#) has so fully written in his *Summa*: also [Godfrey of Fontaine](#) and [S. Raymond of Peñafort](#), who have discussed this question in detail very clearly, not asking whether such a physical condition could be thought imaginary and unreal, but taking it to be an actual and proven fact, and then they lay down whether it is to be treated as a lasting or temporary infirmity if it continued for more than the space of three years, and they do not doubt that it may be brought about by the power of witchcraft, although it is true that this condition may be intermittent. But what is a fact beyond dispute is that such impotency can be brought about through the power of the devil by means of a contract made with him, or even by the devil himself without the assistance of any witch, although this most rarely happens in the Church, since marriage is a most excellent sacrament. But amongst Pagans this actually does happen, and this is because evil spirits act as if they had a certain legitimate dominion over them, as [Peter of Palude](#) in his fourth book relates, when he tells of the young man who had pledged himself in wedlock to a certain idol, and who nevertheless in the Church the devil prefers to operate through the medium of witches and to bring about such effects for his own gain, that is to say, for the loss of souls. And in what manner he is able to do this, and by what means, will be discussed a little later, where we shall treat of the seven ways of doing harm to men by similar operations. And of the other questions which Theologians and Canonists have raised with reference to these points, one is very important, since they discuss how such impotence can be cured and whether it is permissible to cure it by some counter-charm, and what is to be done if the witch who cast the spell is dead, a circumstance of which Godfrey of Fontaines treats in his *Summa*. And these questions will be amply elucidated in the Third Part of this work.

This then is the reason why the Canonists have so carefully drawn up a table of the various differing penalties, making a distinction between private and open practice of witchcraft, or rather of divination, since this foul superstition has various species and degrees, so that anyone who is notoriously given to it must be refused Communion. If it be secretly practised the culprit must do penance for forty days. And if he be a cleric he is to be suspended and confined in a monastery. If he be a layman he shall be excommunicated, wherefore all such infamous persons must be

punished, together with all those who resort to them, and no excuse at all is to be allowed.

The same penalty too is prescribed by the civil law. For [Azo](#), in his *Summa* upon Book 9 of the Codex, the rubric concerning sorcerers, 2 after the [lex Cornelia](#), concerning assassins and murderers, lays down: Let it be known that all those who are commonly called sorcerers, and those too who are skilled in the art of divination, incur the penalty of death. The same penalty is enforced yet again. For this is the exact sentence of these laws: It is unlawful for any man to practise divination; and is he does so his reward shall be death by the sword of the executioner. There are others too who by their magic charms endeavour to take the lives of innocent people, who turn the passions of women to lusts of every kind, and these criminals are to be thrown to the wild beasts. And the laws allow that any witness whatsoever is to be admitted as evidence against them. This the Canon treating of the defence of the Faith explicitly enjoins. And the same procedure is allowable in a charge of heresy. When such an accusation is brought, any witness may come forward to give evidence, just as he may in a case of lese-majesty. For witchcraft is high treason against God's Majesty. And so they are to be put to the torture in order to make them confess. Any person, whatsoever his rank or position, upon such an accusation may be put to the torture, and he who is found guilty, even if he confesses his crime, let him be racked, let him suffer all other tortures prescribed by law in order that he may be punished in proportion to his offences.

Note: In days of old such criminals suffered a double penalty and were often thrown to wild beast to be devoured by them. Nowadays they are burnt at the stake, and probably this is because the majority of them are women.

The civil law also forbids any conniving at or joining in such practices, for it did not allow a diviner even to enter another person's house; and often it ordered that all their possessions should be burnt, nor was anyone allowed to patronize or to consult them; very often they were deported to some distant and deserted island and all their goods sold by public auction. Moreover, those who consulted or resorted to witches were punished with exile and the confiscation of all their property. These penalties were set in operation by the common consent of all nations and rulers, and they have greatly conduced to the suppression of the practice of such forbidden arts.

It should be observed that the laws highly commend those who seek to nullify the charms of witches. And those who take great pains that the work of man shall not be harmed by the force tempests or by hailstorms are worthy of a great reward rather than of any punishment. How such damage may lawfully be prevented will be discussed in full below. Accordingly, how can it be that the denial or frivolous contradiction of any of these propositions can be free from the mark of some notable heresy? Let every man judge for himself unless indeed his ignorance excuse him. But what sort of ignorance may excuse him we shall very shortly proceed to explain. From what has been already said we draw the following conclusion; It is a most certain and most Catholic opinion that there are sorcerers and witches who by the help of the devil, on account of a compact which they have entered into with him, are able, since God allows this, to produce real and actual evils and harm, which does not render it unlikely that they can also bring about visionary and phantastical illusions by some extraordinary and peculiar means. The scope of the present inquiry, however, is witchcraft, and this very widely differs from these other arts, and therefore a consideration of them would be nothing to the purpose, since those who practise them may with greater accuracy be termed fortune-tellers and soothsayers rather than sorcerers.

It must particularly be noticed that these two last errors are founded upon a complete misunderstanding of the words of the Canon (I will not speak of the first error, which stands obviously self-condemned, since it is clean contrary to the teaching of Holy Scripture). And so let

us proceed to a right understanding of the Canon. And first we will speak against the first error, which says that the mean is mere illusion although the two extremes are realities.

Here it must be noticed that there are fourteen distinct species which come under the genus superstition, but these for the sake of brevity it is hardly necessary to detail, since they have been most clearly set out by [S. Isidore](#) in his *Etymologiae*, Book 8, and by S. Thomas in his *Second of the Second*, question 92. Moreover, there will be explicit mention of these rather lower when we discuss the gravity of this heresy, and this will be in the last question of our First Part.

The category in which women of this sort are to be ranked is called the category of Pythons, persons in or by whom the devil either speaks or performs some astonishing operation, and this is often the first category in order. But the category under which sorcerers come is called the category of Sorcerers.

And inasmuch as these persons differ greatly one from another, it would not be correct that they should not be comprised in that species under which so many others are confined: Wherefore, since the Canon makes explicit mention of certain women, but does not in so many words speak of witches; therefore they are entirely wrong who understand the Canon only to speak of imaginary voyages and goings to and fro in the body and who wish to reduce every kind of superstition to this illusion: for as those women are transported in their imagination, so are witches actually and bodily transported. And he who wishes to argue from this Canon that the effects of witchcraft, the infliction of disease or any sickness, are purely imaginary, utterly mistakes the tenor of the Canon, and errs most grossly.

Further, it is to be observed that those who, whilst they allow the two extremes, that is to say, some operation of the devil and the effect, a sensible disease, to be actual and real, at the same time deny that any instrument is the means thereof; that is to say, they deny that any witch could have participated in such a cause and effect, these, I say, err most gravely: for, in philosophy, the mean must always partake of the nature of the two extremes.

Moreover, it is useless to argue that any result of witchcraft may be a phantasy and unreal, because such a phantasy cannot be procured without resort to the power of the devil, and it is necessary that there should be made a contract with the devil, by which contract the witch truly and actually binds herself to be the servant of the devil and devotes herself to the devil, and this is not done in any dream or under any illusion, but she herself bodily and truly co-operates with, and conjoins herself to, the devil. For this indeed is the end of all witchcraft; whether it be the casting of spells by a look or by a formula of words or by some other charm, it is all of the devil, as will be made clear in the following question.

In truth, if anyone cares to read the words of the Canon, there are four points which must particularly strike him. And the first point is this: It is absolutely incumbent upon all who have the cure of souls, to teach their flocks that there is one, only, true God, and that to none other in Heaven or earth may worship be given. The second point is this, that although these women imagine they are riding (as they think and say) with Diana or with Herodias, in truth they are riding with the devil, who calls himself by some such heathen name and throws a glamour before their eyes. And the third point is this, that the act of riding abroad may be merely illusory, since the devil has extraordinary power over the minds of those who have given themselves up to him, so that what they do in pure imagination, they believe they have actually and really done in the body. And the fourth point is this: Witches have made a compact to obey the devil in all things, wherefore that the words of the Canon should be extended to include and comprise every act of witchcraft is absurd, since witches do much more than these women, and witches actually are of a

very different kind.

Whether witches by their magic arts are actually and bodily transported from place to place, or whether this merely happens in imagination, as is the case with regard to those women who are called Pythons, will be dealt with later in this work, and we shall also discuss how they are conveyed. So now we have explained two errors, at least, and we have arrived at a clear understanding of the sense of the Canon.

Moreover, a third error, which mistaking the words of the Canon says that all magic arts are illusions, may be corrected from the very words of the Canon itself. For inasmuch as it says that he who believes any creature can be made or transformed for the better or the worse, or metamorphosed into some other species or likeness, save it be by the Creator of all things Himself, etc . . . . he is worse than an infidel. These three propositions, if they are thus understood as they might appear on the bare face of them, are clean contrary to the sense of Holy Scripture and the commentaries of the doctors of the Church. For the following Canon clearly says that creatures can be made by witches, although they necessarily must be very imperfect creatures, and probably in some way deformed. And it is plain that the sense of the Canon agrees with what S. Augustine tells us concerning the magicians at the court of Pharaoh, who turned their rods into serpents, as the holy doctor writes upon the 7th chapter of Exodus, ver. II, - and Pharaoh called the wise men and the magicians . . . . We may also refer to the commentaries of Strabo, who says that devils hurry up and down over the whole earth, when by their incantations witches are employing them at various operations, and these devils are able to collect various species to grow. We may also refer to [Blessed Albertus Magnus](#), *De animalibus*. And also S. Thomas, Part I, question 114, article 4. For the sake of conciseness we will not quote them at length here, but this remains proven, that it is possible for certain creatures to be created in this way.

With reference to the second point, that a creature may be changed for better or worse, it is always to be understood that this can only be done by the permission and indeed by the power of God, and that this is only done in order to correct or to punish, but that God very often allows devils to act as His ministers and His servants, but throughout all it is God alone who can afflict and it is He alone who can heal, for "I kill and I make alive" (*Deuteronomy xxxii, 39*). And so evil angels may and do perform the will of God. To this also S. Augustine bears witness when he says: There are in truth magic spells and evil charms, which not only often afflict men with diseases but even kill them outright. We must also endeavour clearly to understand what actually happens when nowadays by the power of the devil wizards and witches are changed into wolves and other savage beasts. The Canon, however, speaks of some bodily and lasting change, and does not discuss those extraordinary things which may be done by glamour of which S. Augustine speaks in the 18th book and the 17th chapter of *Of the City of God*, when he reports many strange tales of that famous witch Circe, and of the companions of Diomedes and of the father of Praestantius. This will be discussed in detail in the Second Part.

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*“Blessed Henry.” Blessed Henry of Segusio, usually called Hostiensis, the famous Italian canonist of the thirteenth century, was born at Susa, and died at Lyons, 25 October, 1271. After a most distinguished career, on 4 December, 1261, he became Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia and Velletri, whence his name Hostiensis. His “Summa super titulis Decretalium” (Strasburg, 1512; Cologne, 1612; Venice, 1605), which was also known as “Summa aurea,” or “Summa archiepiscopi,” since it was written whilst he was Archbishop of Embrun, won for its author the title “Monarcha iuris, lumen lucidissimum Decretorum.” One portion of this work, the “Summa, siue Tractatus de poenitentia et remissionibus,” was very popular, and is continually referred to as of high authority. The book was written between 1250 and 1261.*

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*“Godfrey.” Godfrey of Fontaines, Doctor Uenerandus, scholastic philosopher and theologian, was born near Liège within the first half of the thirteenth century; he became a canon of his native diocese, and also of Paris and Cologne. In 1300 he was elected to the See of Tournai, which he declined. During the last quarter of the century he taught theology with great distinction at the University of Paris. His vast work, “XIV Quodlibeta,” which in manuscript was extensively studied in the mediaeval schools, has recently been published for the first time with an ample commentary.*

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*“S. Raymond.” One of the most distinguished names of the Dominican Order. Born in 1175, he professed Canon law at Barcelona and Bologna. At the request of his superiors he published his “Summa Casuum,” of which several editions appeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His reputation as a jurist was so great that in 1230 he was called to Rome by Gregory IX, who directed him to rearrange and condify the ecclesiastical canons. Having completed the work, he refused all honours, and returned to Spain. He died at Barcelona, 6 January, 1275. His feast is celebrated on 23 January.*

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*“Peter of Palude.” Peter of Palude, who died 1342, of the Order of S. Dominic, was one of the most distinguished Thomistic theologians during the first half of the fourteenth century.*

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*“Azo.” Early in the thirteenth century Portius Azo stood at the head of the Bolognese school of law which was accomplishing the resuscitation of the classical Roman law. He was the pupil of the celebrated Johannes Bassianus, and his fame so eclipsed all his contemporaries that in 1205 Thomas of Marlborough, afterwards Abbot of Evesham, spent six months at Bologna hearing his lectures every day. Azo was saluted as “Master of all the Masters of the laws,” and the highest praise that could be given another canonist was to declare him to be “second only to Azo.” Savigrey says that Azo was alive as late as 1230. His chief work is a “Summa” of the first nine books of the Code, to which he added a “Summa” of the Institutes. No less than thirty-one editions appeared between 1482 and 1610; of which five are earlier than 1500. Throughout the Middle Ages these treatises were in highest respute.*

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*“Lex Cornelia.” De Sicariis et Ueneficis. Passed circa 81 B.C. This law dealt with incendiarism as well as open assassination and poisoning, and laid down penalties for accessories to the fact.*

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*“St. Isidore.” The “Etymologiae,” or “Origines” as it is sometimes called, must be regarded as the most important and best known of the works of S. Isidore of Seville, born circa 560; died 4 April, 636. It has been described as “a vast storehouse in which is gathered, systematized, and condensed, all the learning possessed by that time.” Throughout the greater part of the Middle Ages it was the text-book most in use in educational institutions. Arevalo, who is regarded as the most authoritative editor of S. Isidore (7 vols., Rome, 1797-1803), tells us that it was printed no less than ten times between 1470 and 1529.*

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*“Blessed Albertus.” Albert the Great, the Dominican doctor, scientist, philosopher, and theologian. Born circa 1206; died at Cologne, 15 November, 1280. He is called “the Great” and “Doctor Universalis” on account of his extraordinary genius and encyclopaedic knowledge, for he surpassed all his contemporaries in every branch of learning cultivated in his day. He is certainly one of the glories of the Order of Preachers. Ulrich Endelbert speaks of him as: “Uir in omni scientia adeo divinus, ut nostri temporis stupor et miraculum congrue vocari possit” (“De summo bono,” III, iv). Perhaps at the present day his extraordinary genius is not sufficiently recognized, for he was certainly one of the most learned men of all time. The latest edition of his complete works, Paris (Louis Vives), 1890-99, in thirty-eight quarto volumes, was published under the direction of the Abbé Auguste Borgnet, of the diocese of Reims. “De animalibus” will be found in Vols. XI-XII. The feast of Albertus Magnus is celebrated on 15 November. He was beatified by Gregory XV in 1622, so in this translation I call him “Blessed” by anticipation.*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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*PART I.  
QUESTION I. CONTINUED . . . .*

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*Whether it be a Heresy to Maintain that Witches Exist.*

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The second part of our inquiry is this, whether obstinately to maintain that witches exist is heretical. The question arises whether people who hold that witches do not exist are to be regarded as notorious heretics, or whether they are to be regarded as gravely suspect of holding heretical opinions. It *seems* that the first opinion is the correct one. For this is undoubtedly in accordance with the opinion of the learned Bernard. And yet those persons who openly and obstinately persevere in heresy must be proved to be heretics by unshaken evidence, and such demonstration is generally one of three kinds; either a man has openly preached and proclaimed heretical doctrines; or he is proved to be a heretic by the evidence of trustworthy witnesses; or he is proved to be a heretic by his own free confession. And yet there are some who rashly opposing themselves to all authority publicly proclaim that witches do not exist, or at any rate that they can in no way afflict and hurt mankind. Wherefore, strictly speaking those who are convicted of such evil doctrine may be excommunicated, since they are openly and unmistakably to be convicted of false doctrine. The reader may consult the works of Bernard, where he will find that this sentence is just, right, and true. Yet perhaps this may seem to be altogether too severe a judgement mainly because of the penalties which follow upon excommunication: for the Canon prescribes that a cleric is to be degraded and that a layman is to be handed over to the power of the secular courts, who are admonished to punish him as his offence deserves. Moreover, we must take into consideration the very great numbers of persons who, owing to their ignorance, will surely be found guilty of this error. And since the error is very common the rigor of strict justice may be tempered with mercy. And it is indeed our intention to try to make excuses for those who are guilty of this heresy rather than to accuse them of being infected with the malice of heresy. It is preferable then that if a man should be even gravely suspected of holding this false opinion he should not be immediately condemned for the grave crime of heresy. (See the gloss of [Bernard](#) upon the word *Condemned*.) One may in truth proceed against such a man as against a person who is gravely suspect, but he is not to be condemned in his absence and without a hearing. And yet the suspicion may be very grave, and we cannot refrain from suspecting these people, for their frivolous assertions do certainly seem to affect the purity of the faith. For there are three kinds of suspicion - a light suspicion, a serious suspicion, and a grave suspicion. These are treated of in the chapter on Accusations and in the chapter on Contumacy, Book 6, on *Heretics*. And these things come under the cognizance of the archidiaconal court. Reference may also be made to the commentaries of [Giovanni d'Andrea](#), and in particular to his glosses upon the phrases *Accused*; *Gravely suspect*; and his note upon a presumption of heresy. It is certain too that some who lay down the law on this subject do not realize that they are holding false doctrines and errors, for there are many who have no knowledge of the Canon law, and there are some who, owing to the fact that they are badly informed and insufficiently read, waver in their opinions and cannot make

up their minds, and since an idea merely kept to oneself is not heresy unless it be afterwards put forward, obstinately and openly maintained, it should certainly be said that persons such as we have just mentioned are not to be openly condemned for the crime of heresy. But let no man think he may escape by pleading ignorance. For those who have gone astray through ignorance of this kind may be found to have sinned very gravely. For although there are many degrees of ignorance, nevertheless those who have the cure of souls cannot plead invincible ignorance, as the philosophers call it, which by the writers on Canon law and by the Theologians is called Ignorance of the Fact. But what is to be blamed in these persons is Universal ignorance, that is to say, an ignorance of the divine law, which, as [Pope Nicholas](#) has laid down, they must and should know. For he says: The dispensation of these divine teachings is entrusted to our charge: and woe be unto us if we do not sow the good seed, woe be unto us if we do not teach our flocks. And so those who have the charge of souls are bound to have a sound knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures. It is true that according to [Raymond of Sabunde](#) and S. Thomas, those who have the cure of souls are certainly not bound to be men of any extraordinary learning, but they certainly should have a competent knowledge, that is to say, knowledge sufficient to carry out the duties of their state.

And yet, and this may be some small consolation to them, the theoretical severity of law is often balanced by the actual practice, and they may know that this ignorance of the Canon law, although sometimes it may be culpable and worthy of blame, is considered from two points of view. For sometimes persons do not know, they do not wish to know, and they have no intention of knowing. For such persons there is no excuse, but they are to be altogether condemned. And of these the Psalmist speaks: He would not understand in order that he might do good. But secondly, there are those who are ignorant, yet not from any desire not to know. And this diminishes the gravity of the sin, because there is no actual consent of the will. And such a case is this, when anyone ought to know something, but cannot realize that he ought to know it, as S. Paul says in his 1st Epistle to Timothy (i.13): But I obtained the mercy of God, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And this is technically said to be an ignorance, which indirectly at least is the fault of the person, insomuch as on account of many of occupations he neglects to inform himself of matters which he ought to know, and he does not use any endeavour to make himself acquainted with them, and this ignorance does not entirely excuse him, but it excuses him to a certain degree. So [S. Ambrose](#), writing upon that passage in the *Romans* (ii, 4): Knowest thou not, that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance? says, If thou dost not know through thine own fault then thy sin is very great and grievous. More especially then in these days, when souls are beset with so many dangers, we must take measures to dispel all ignorance, and we must always have before our eyes that sever judgement which will be passed upon us if we do not use, everyone according to his proper ability, the one talent which has been given. In this way our ignorance will be neither thick nor stupid, for metaphorically we speak of men as thick and stupid who do not see what lies directly in their very way.

And in the *Flores regularum moralium* the Roman Chancellor commenting upon the second rule says: A culpable ignorance of the Divine law does not of necessity affect the ignorant person. The reason is this: the Holy Spirit is able directly to instruct a man in all that knowledge essential to salvation, if these things are too difficult for him to grasp unaided by his own natural intellect.

The answer to the first objection then is a clear and correct understanding of the Canon. To the second objection Peter of Tarentaise ([Blessed Innocent V](#)) replies: No doubt the devil, owing to his malice which he harbours against the human race, would destroy mankind if he were allowed by God to do so. The fact that God allows him sometimes to do harm and that sometimes

God hinders and prevents him, manifestly brings the devil into more open contempt and loathing, since in all things, to the manifestation of His glory, God is using the devil, unwilling though he be, as a servant and slave. With regard to the third objection, that the infliction of sickness or some other harm is always the result of human effort, whereby the witch submits her will to evil, and so actually as any other evil-doer, by the volition of her will can afflict some person or bring about some damage or perform some villainous act. If it be asked whether the movement of material objects from place to place by the devil may be paralleled by the movement of the spheres, the answer is No. Because material objects are not thus moved by any natural inherent power of their own, but they are only moved by a certain obedience to the power of the devil, who by the virtue of his own nature has a certain dominion over bodies and material things; he has this certain power, I affirm, yet he is not able to add to created material objects any form or shape, be it substantial or accidental, without some admixture of or compounding with another created natural object. But since, by the will of God, he is able to move material objects from place to place, then by the conjunction of various objects he can produce disease or some circumstance such as he will. Wherefore the spells and effects of witchcraft are not governed by the movement of the spheres, nor is the devil himself thus governed, inasmuch as he may often make use of these conditions to do him service.

The answer to the fourth objection. The work of God can be destroyed by the work of the devil in accordance with what we are now saying with reference to the power and effects of witchcraft. But since this can only be by the permission of God, it does not at all follow that the devil is stronger than God. Again, he cannot use so much violence as he wishes to harm the works of God, because if he were unrestricted he would utterly destroy all the works of God.

The answer to the fifth objection may be clearly stated thus: The planets and stars have no power to coerce and compel devils to perform any actions against their will, although seemingly demons are readier to appear when summoned by magicians under the influence of certain stars. It appears that they do this for two reasons. First, because they know that the power of that planet will aid the effect which the magicians desire. Secondly, They do this in order to deceive men, thus making them suppose that the stars have some divine power or actual divinity, and we know that in days of old this veneration of the stars led to the vilest idolatry.

With reference to the last objection, which is founded upon the argument that gold is made by alchemists, we may put forward the opinion of S. Thomas when he discusses the power of the devil and how he works: Although certain forms having a substance may be brought about by art and the power of a natural agent, as, for example, the form fire is brought about by art employed on wood: nevertheless, this cannot be done universally, because art cannot always either find or yet mix together the proper proportions, and yet it can produce something similar. And thus alchemists make something similar to gold, that is to say, in so far as the external accidents are concerned, but nevertheless they do not make true gold, because the substance of gold is not formed by the heat of fire which alchemists employ, but by the heat of the sun, acting and reacting upon a certain spot where mineral power is concentrated and amassed, and therefore such gold is of the same likeness as, but is not of the same species as, natural gold. And the same argument applies to all their other operations.

This then is our proposition: devils by their act do bring about evil effects through witchcraft, yet it is true that without the assistance of some agent they cannot make any form, either substantial or accidental, and we do not maintain that they can inflict damage without the



assistance of some agent, but with such an agent diseases, and any other human passions or ailments, can be brought about, and these are real and true. How these agents or how the employment of such means can be rendered effective in co-operation with devils will be made clear in the following chapters.

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## [Question II](#)

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*“Bernard.” Junior, or Modernus, a canonist who lived in the middle of the thirteenth century, called “Compostellanus” from the fact that he possessed an ecclesiastical benefice in Compostella. He was also known as Brignadius from his birthplace in Galicia, Spain. Bernard was chaplain to Innocent IV, who reigned 1243-54, and was himself a noted canonist. Bernard's Commentaries on Canon law are very copious and very celebrated. He is termed Modernus to distinguish him from Bernard Antiquus, a canonist of the early thirteenth century, a native of Compostella, who became Professor of Canon law in the University of Bologna.*

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*“Giovanni d'Andrea.” This distinguished canonist was born at Mugello, near Florence, about 1275; died 1348. He was educated at the University of Bologna, where he afterwards became Professor of Canon law. He had previously taught at Padua and Pisa, and his career as a lecturer extended for nearly half a century. His works are “Glossarium in VI decretalium librum,” Venice and Lyons, 1472; “Glossarium in Clementinas”; “Nouella, siue Commentarius in decretales epistolas Gregorii IX,” Venice, 1581; “Mercuriales, siue commentarius in regulas sexti”; “Liber de laudibus S. Hieronymi”; “Additamenta ad speculum Durand” (1347).*

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*“Pope Nicholas.” Nicholas V, 1397-1455, the great patron of learning.*

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*“Raymond of Sabunde.” Born at Barcelona, Spain, towards the end of the fourteenth century; died 1432. From 1430 to his death he taught theology, philosophy, and medicine at the University of Toulouse. Of his many works only one remains, “Theologia Naturalis.” It was first written in Spanish, and translated into Latin at various times: December, 1487; Strasburg, 1496; Paris, 1509; Venice, 1581, etc. Montaigne, who translated the book into French, Paris, 1569, bears witness to the extraordinary popularity it enjoyed in his own day.*

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*“S. Ambrose.” On désigne depuis le XVI siècle sous le nom d'Ambrosiaster (= pseudo-Ambroise) l'auteur anonyme d'un commentair sur les Epîtres de saint Paul (à l'exclusion de Epître aux Hébreux), qui au moyenâge, peut-être même dès l'époque de Cassiodore, fut imputé inexactement à saint Ambroise. Cette paraphrase est tout à fait remarquable; c'est l'une des plus intéressantes que l'antiquité chrétienne nous ait léguées.” Labriolle, “Histoire de la Litterérature Latine Chrétienne,” c. III.*

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*“Innocent V.” Petrus a Tarentasia, born in Tarentaise, towards 1225, elected at Arezzo, 21 January, 1276; died at Rome, 22 June, 1276. At the age of sixteen he joined the Dominican Order, and he won great distinction as a Professor at the University of Paris, whence he is known as Doctor Famosissimus. He is the author of several works dealing with philosophy, theology, and Canon law, some of which are still unpublished. The principal of these is the “Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard.” I have used the edition, Toulouse, 1652.*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION II.*

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If it be in accordance with the Catholic Faith to maintain that in order to bring about some effect of magic, the devil must intimately co-operate with the witch, or whether one without the other, that is to say, the devil without the witch, or conversely, could produce such an effect.

And the first argument is this: That the devil can bring about an effect of magic without the co-operation of any witch. So S. Augustine holds. All things which visibly happen so that they can be seen, may (it is believed) be the work of the inferior powers of the air. But bodily ills and ailments are certainly not invisible, nay rather, they are evident to the senses, therefore they can be brought about by devils. Moreover, we learn from the Holy Scriptures of the disasters which fell upon Job, how fire fell from heaven and striking the sheep and the servants consumed them, and how a violent wind threw down the four corners of a house so that it fell upon his children and slew them all. The devil by himself without the co-operation of any witches, but merely by God's permission alone, was able to bring about all these disasters. Therefore he can certainly do many things which are often ascribed to the work of witches.

And this is obvious from the account of the seven husbands of the maiden Sara, whom a devil killed. Moreover, whatever a superior power is able to do, it is able to do without reference to a power superior to it, and a superior power can all the more work without reference to an inferior power. But an inferior power can cause hailstorms and bring about diseases without the help of a power greater than itself. For Blessed Albertus Magnus in his work *De passionibus aeris* says that rotten sage, if used as he explains, and thrown into running water, will arouse most fearful tempests and storms.

Moreover, it may be said that the devil makes use of a witch, not because he has need of any such agent, but because he is seeking the perdition of the witch. We may refer to what Aristotle says in the 3rd book of his *Ethics*. Evil is a voluntary act which is proved by the fact that nobody performs an unjust action, and a man who commits a rape does this for the sake of pleasure, not merely doing evil for evil's sake. Yet the law punishes those who have done evil as if they had acted merely for the sake of doing evil. Therefore if the devil works by means of a witch he is merely employing an instrument; and since an instrument depends upon the will of the person who employs it and does not act of its own free will, therefore the guilt of the action ought not to be laid to the charge of the witch, and in consequence she should not be punished.

But an opposite opinion holds that the devil cannot so easily and readily do harm by himself to mankind, as he can harm them through the instrumentality of witches, although they are his servants. In the first place we may consider the act of generation. But for every act which has an effect upon another some kind of contact must be established, and because the devil, who is a spirit, can have no such actual contact with a human body, since there is nothing common of this kind between them, therefore he uses some human instruments, and upon these he bestows the power of hurting by bodily touch. And many hold this to be proven by the text, and the gloss upon



the text, in the 3rd chapter of S. Paul's Epistle to the [Galatians](#): O senseless Galatians, who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth? And the gloss upon this passage refers to those who have singularly fiery and baleful eyes, who by a mere look can harm others, especially young children. And [Avicenna](#) also bears this out, *Naturalism*, Book 3, c. the last, when he says; "Very often the soul may have as much influence upon the body of another to the same extent as it has upon its own body, for such is the influence of the eyes of anyone who by his glance attracts and fascinates another." And the same opinion is maintained by [Al-Gazali](#) in the 5th book and 10th c. of his *Physics*. Avicenna also suggests, although he does not put this opinion forward as irrefutable, that the power of the imagination can actually change or seem to change extraneous bodies, in cases where the power of the imagination is too unrestrained; and hence we father that the power of the imagination is not to be considered as distinct from a man's other sensible powers, since it is common to them all, but to some extent it includes all those other powers. And this is true, because such a power of the imagination can change adjacent bodies, as, for example, when a man is able to walk along some narrow beam which is stretched down the middle of a street. But yet if this beam were suspended over deep water he would not dare to walk along it, because his imagination would most strongly impress upon his mind the idea of falling, and therefore his body and the power of his limbs would not obey his imagination, and they would not obey the contrary thereto, that is to say, walking directly and without hesitation. This change may be compared to the influence exercised by the eyes of a person who has such influence, and so a mental change is brought about although there is not any actual and bodily change.

Moreover, if it be argued that such a change is cause by a living body owing to the influence of the mind upon some other living body, this answer may be given. In the presence of a murderer blood flows from the wounds in the corpse of the person he has slain. Therefore without any mental powers bodies can produce wonderful effects, and so a living man if he pass by near the corpse of a murdered man, although he may not be aware of the dead body, is often seized with fear.

Again, there are some things in nature which have certain hidden powers, the reason for which man does not know; such, for example, is the lodestone, which attracts steel and many other such things, which S. Augustine mentions in the 20th book *Of the City of God*.

And so women in order to bring about changes in the bodies of others sometimes make use of certain things, which exceed our knowledge, but this is without any aid from the devil. And because these remedies are mysterious we must not therefore ascribe them to the power of the devil as we should ascribe evil spells wrought by witches.

Moreover, witches use certain images and other strange periapts, which they are wont to place under the lintels of the doors of houses, or in those meadows where flocks are herding, or even where men congregate, and thus they cast spells over their victims, who have oft-times been known to die. But because such extraordinary effects can proceed from these images it would appear that the influence of these images is in proportion to the influence of the stars over human bodies, for as natural bodies are influenced by heavenly bodies, so may artificial bodies likewise be thus influenced. But natural bodies may find the benefit of certain secret but good influences. Therefore artificial bodies may receive such influence. Hence it is plain that those who perform works of healing may well perform them by means of such good influences, and this has no connexion at all with any evil power.

Moreover, it would seem that most extraordinary and miraculous events come to pass by the

working of the power of nature. For wonderful and terrible and amazing things happen owing to natural forces. And this S. Gregory points out in his *Second Dialogue*. The Saints perform miracles, sometimes by a prayer, sometimes by their power alone. There are examples of each; S. Peter by praying [raised to life Tabitha, who was dead](#). By rebuking Ananias and Sapphira, who were telling a lie, he slew the without any prayer. Therefore a man by his mental influence can change a material body into another, or he can change such a body from health to sickness and conversely.

Moreover, the human body is nobler than any other body, but because of the passions of the mind the human body changes and becomes hot or cold, as is the case with angry men or men who are afraid: and so even greater change takes place with regard to the effects of sickness and death, which by their power can greatly change a material body.

But certain objections must be allowed. The influence of the mind cannot make an impression upon any form except by the intervention of some agent, as we have said above. And these are the words of S. Augustine in the book which we have already quoted: It is incredible that the angels who fell from Heaven should be obedient to any material things, for the obey God only. And much less can a man of his natural power bring about extraordinary and evil effects. The answer must be made, there are even to-day many who err greatly on this point, making excuses for witches and laying the whole blame upon the craft of the devil, or ascribing the changes that they work to some natural alteration. These errors may be easily made clear. First, by the description of witches which S. Isidore gives in his *Etymologiae*, c. 9: Witches are so called on account of the blackness of their guilt, that is to say, their deeds are more evil than those of any other malefactors. He continues: They stir up and confound the elements by the aid of the devil, and arouse terrible hailstorms and tempests. Moreover, he says they distract the minds of men, driving them to madness, insane hatred, and inordinate lusts. Again, he continues, by the terrible influence of their spells alone, as it were by a draught of poison, they can destroy life.

And the words of S. Augustine in his book on *The City of God* are very much to the point, for he tells us who magicians and witches really are. Magicians, who are commonly called witches, are thus termed on account of the magnitude of their evil deeds. These are they who by the permission of God disturb the elements, who drive to distraction the minds of men, such as have lost their trust in God, and by the terrible power of their evil spells, without any actual draught or poison, kill human beings. As Lucan says: A mind which has not been corrupted by any noxious drink perishes forsaken by some evil charm. For having summoned devils to their aid they actually dare to heap harms upon mankind, and even to destroy their enemies by their evil spells. And it is certain that in operations of this kind the witch works in close conjunction with the devil. Secondly, punishments are of four kinds: beneficial, hurtful, wrought by witchcraft, and natural. Beneficial punishments are meted out by the ministry of good Angels, just as hurtful punishments proceed from evil spirits. Moses smote Egypt with ten plagues by the ministry of good Angels, and the magicians were only able to perform three of these miracles by the aid of the devil. And the pestilence which fell upon the people for three days because of the sin of David who numbered the people, and the 72,000 men who were slain in one night in the army of Sennacherib, were miracles wrought by the Angels of God, that is, by good Angels who feared God and knew that they were carrying out His commands.

Destructive harm, however, is wrought by the medium of bad angels, at whose hands the children of Israel in the desert were often afflicted. And those harms which are simply evil and nothing more are brought about by the devil, who works through the medium of sorcerers and

witches. There are also natural harms which in some manner depend upon the conjunction of heavenly bodies, such as dearth, drought, tempests, and similar effects of nature.

It is obvious that there is a vast difference between all these causes, circumstances, and happenings. For Job was afflicted by the devil with a harmful disease, but this is nothing to the purpose. And if anybody who is too clever and over-curious asks how it was that Job was afflicted with this disease by the devil without the aid of some sorcerer or witch, let him know that he is merely beating the air and not informing himself as to the real truth. For in the time of Job there were no sorcerers and witches, and such abominations were not yet practised. But the providence of God wished that by the example of Job the power of the devil even over good men might be manifested, so that we might learn to be on our guard against Satan, and, moreover, by the example of this holy patriarch the glory of God shines abroad, since nothing happens save what is permitted by God.

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[Question II continued . . . .](#)

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*“De passionibus.” This treatise on physical science may be found in Vol. IX. of Abbé Bornet's edition of the “Opera omnia.”*

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“Galatians.” iii, i. The original Greek is ὦ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται· τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβασκάνεν  
τῇ ἀληθείᾳ μὴ πείθεσθαι; Curtius doubts the etymological connexion between  
βασκάνω and Latin “fascino” as from a root ΦΑΣ. In classical times the charm was  
dissolved by spitting thrice. Cf. Theocritus, VI, 39: ὡς μή βασκάνεν ὄψε’ τρίς εἰς ἐμὸν  
κόλπον·

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*“[Avicenna](#).” Abn Ali Al Hosian Ibn Addalah Ibn Sina, Arabian physician and philosopher, born at Kharmaiten, in the province of Bokhara, 980; died at Hamadan, in Northern Persia, 1037. It should be noted that the Schoolmen were aware of the pantheistic tendencies of Avicenna's philosophical works, and accordingly were reluctant to trust to his exposition of Aristotle.*

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*“Al-Gazali.” Abu Hamid Mohammed Ibn Mohammed, the celebrated Arabian philosopher, born at Tous in Khorasan in 1038; died at Nissapour in 1111. He passed through complete scepticism to the mysticism of the Sufis. It is often said that Blessed Albertus Magnus wrote thus: “Non approbo dictum Avicennae et Algazel de fascinatione, quia credo quod non nocet fascinatio, nec nocere potest ars magica, nec facit aliquid ex his quae timentur de talibus.” But thus passage is more than suspicious.*

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### **Abu Hamid al-Ghazali:**

[\*Munkidh min al-Dalal \(Confessions, or Deliverance from Error\)\*](#), c. 1100 CE

[\*The Remembrance\*](#)

*“Second Dialogue.” The “Dialogorum Libri IV” is one of the most famous of S. Gregory's works, and very many separate editions have appeared.*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I.* *QUESTION II. CONTINUED . . . .*

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With regard to the time at which this evil superstition, witchcraft, appeared, we must first distinguish the worshippers of the devil from those who were merely idolaters. And [Vincent of Beauvais](#) in his *Speculum historiale*, quoting many learned authorities, says that he who first practised the arts of magic and of astrology was [Zoroaster](#), who is said to have been [Cham](#) the son of Noe. And according to S. Augustine in his book *Of the City of God*, Cham laughed aloud when he was born, and thus showed that he was a servant of the devil, and he, although he was a great and mighty king, was conquered by Ninus the son of Belus, who built Ninive, whose reign was the beginning of the kingdom of Assyria in the time of Abraham.

Thus Ninus, owing to his insane love for his father, when his father was dead, ordered a statue of his father to be made, and whatever criminal took refuge there was free from any punishment which he might have incurred. From this time men began to worship images as though they were gods; but this was after the earliest years of history, for in the very first ages there was no idolatry, since in the earliest times men still preserved some remembrance of the creation of the world, as S. Thomas says, Book 2, question 95, article 4. Or it may have originated with [Nembroth](#), who compelled men to worship fire; and thus in the second age of the world there began Idolatry, which is the first of all superstitions, as Divination is the second, and the Observing of Times and Seasons the third.

The practices of witches are included in the second kind of superstition, which is to say Divination, since they expressly invoke the devil. And there are three kinds of this superstition: - Necromancy, Astrology, or rather Astromancy, the superstitious observation of stars, and Oneiromancy.

I have explained all this at length that the reader may understand that these evil arts did not suddenly burst upon the world, but rather were developed in the process of time, and therefore it was not impertinent to point out that there were no witches in the days of Job. For as the years went by, as S. Gregory says in his *Moralia*, the knowledge of the Saints grew: and therefore the evil craft of the devil likewise increased. The prophet Isaias says: The earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord (xi, 6). And so in this twilight and evening of the world, when sin is flourishing on every side and in every place, when charity is growing cold, the evil of witches and their inequities superabound.

And since Zoroaster was wholly given up to the magic arts, it was the devil alone who inspired him to study and observe the stars. Very early did sorcerers and witches make compacts with the devil and connive with him to bring harm upon human beings. This is proved in the seventh chapter of *Exodus*, where the magicians of Pharaoh by the power of the devil wrought extraordinary wonders, imitating those plagues which Moses had brought upon Egypt by the power of good angels.

Hence it follows the Catholic teaching, that in order to bring about evil a witch can and does

co-operate with the devil. And any objections to this may briefly be answered thus.

1. In the first place, nobody denies that certain harms and damages which actually and visibly afflict men, animals, the fruits of the earth, and which often come about by the influence of stars, may yet often be brought about by demons, when God permits them to act. For as S. Augustine says in the 4th book *Of the City of God*: Demons may make use of both fire and air if God allow them so to do. And a commentator remarks: God punishes by the power of evil angels.

2. From this obviously follows the answer to any objection concerning Job, and to any objections which may be raised to our account of the beginnings of magic in the world.

3. With regard to the fact that rotten sage which is thrown into running water is said to produce some evil effect without the help of the devil, although it may not be wholly disconnected with the influence of certain stars, we would point out that we do not intend to discuss the good or evil influence of the stars, but only witchcraft, and therefore this is beside the point.

4. With regard to the fourth argument, it is certainly true that the devil only employs witches to bring about their bale and destruction. But when it is deduced that they are not to be punished, because they only act as instruments which are moved not by their own volition but at the will and pleasure of the principal and agent, there is a ready answer: For they are human instruments and free agents, and although they have made a compact and a contract with the devil, nevertheless they do enjoy absolute liberty: for, as has been learnt from their own revelations - and I speak of women who have been convicted and burned at the stake and who were compelled to wreak vengeance and evil and damage if they wished to escape punishments and blows inflicted by the devil - yet these women co-operate with the devil although they are bound to him by that profession by which at first they freely and willingly gave themselves over to his power.

With regard to these other arguments, in which it is proved that certain old women have an occult knowledge which enables them to bring about extraordinary and indeed evil effects without the aid of the devil. It must be understood that from one particular to conclude a universal argument is contrary to all sound reason. And when, as it seems, throughout the whole of the Scriptures no such instance can be found, save where it speaks of the charms and spells old women practise, therefore we must not hence conclude that this is always the case. Moreover, the authorities on these passages leave the matter open to question, that is to say, whether such charms have any efficacy without the co-operation of the devil. These charms or fascinations seem capable of division into three kinds. First, the senses are deluded, and this may truly be done by magic, that is to say, by the power of the devil, if God permit it. And the senses may be enlightened by the power of good angels. Secondly, fascination may bring about a certain glamour and a leading astray, as when the apostle says: Who hath bewitched you? *Galatians* iii, I. In the third place, there may be a certain fascination [cast by the eyes](#) over another person, and this may be harmful and bad.

And it is of this fascination that Avicenna and Al-Gazali have spoken; S. Thomas to thus mentions this fascination, Part I, question 117. For he says the mind of a man may be changed by the influence of another mind. And that influence which is exerted over another often proceeds from the eyes, for in the eyes a certain subtle influence may be concentrated. For the eyes direct their glance upon a certain object without taking notice of other things, and although the vision be perfectly clear, yet at the sight of some impurity, such, for example, a woman during her monthly periods, the eyes will as it were contract a certain impurity. This is what Aristotle says in his work [On Sleep and Waking](#), and thus if anybody's spirit be inflamed with malice or rage, as is often the

case with old women, then their disturbed spirit looks through their eyes, for their countenances are most evil and harmful, and often terrify young children of tender years, who are extremely impressionable. And it may be that this is often natural, permitted by God; on the other hand, it may be that these evil looks are often inspired by the malice of the devil, with whom old witches have made some secret contract.

The next question arises with regard to the influence of the heavenly bodies, and here we find three very common errors, but these will be answered as we proceed to the explain other matters.

With regard to operations of witchcraft, we find that some of these may be due to mental influence over others, and in some cases such mental influence might be a good one, but it is the motive which makes it evil.

And there are four principal arguments which are to be objected against those who deny that there are witches, or magical operations, which may be performed at the conjunction of certain planets and stars, and that by the malice of human beings harm may be wrought through fashioning images, though the use of spells, and by the writing of mysterious characters. All theologians and philosophers agree that the heavenly bodies are guided and directed by certain spiritual mediums. But those spirits are superior to our minds and souls, just as the heavenly bodies are superior to other bodies, and therefore they can influence both the mind and body of a man, so that he is persuaded and directed to perform some human act. But in order yet more fully to attempt a solution of these matters, we may consider certain difficulties from a discussion of which we shall yet more clearly arrive at the truth. First, spiritual substance cannot change bodies to some other natural form unless it be through the mediumship of some agent. Therefore, however strong a mental influence may be, it cannot effect any change in a man's mind or disposition. Moreover, several universities, especially that of Paris, have condemned the following article: - That an enchanter is able to cast a camel into a deep ditch merely by directing his gaze upon it. And so this article is condemned, that a corporeal body should obey some spiritual substance if this be understood simply, that is to say, if the obedience entails some actual change or transformation. For in regard to this it is God alone Who is absolutely obeyed. Bearing these points in mind we may soon see how that fascination, or influence of the eyes of which we have spoken, is possible. For it is not possible that a man through the natural powers of his mind should direct such power from his eyes that, without the agency of his own body or of some other medium, he should be able to do harm to the body of another man. Nor is it possible that a man through the natural powers of his mind should at his will bring about some change, and by directing this power through the mediumship of his eyes entirely transform the body of a man, upon whom he fixes his gaze, just as his will and pleasure may be.

And therefore in neither of these ways can one man influence another and fascinate another, for no man by the natural powers of his mind alone possesses such an extraordinary influence. Therefore, to wish to prove that evil effects can be produced by some natural power is to say that this natural power is the power of the devil, which is very far indeed from the truth.

Nevertheless, we may more clearly set forth how it is possible for a careful gaze to do harm. It may so happen that if a man or a woman gaze steadfastly at some child, the child, owing to its power of sight and power of imagination, may receive some very sensible and direct impression. And an impression of this kind is often accompanied by a bodily change, and since the eyes are one of the tenderest organs of the body, therefore they are very liable to such impressions. Therefore it may well happen that the eyes receive some bad impression and change for the worse, since very often the thoughts of the mind or the motions of the body are particularly impressed

upon and shown by the eyes. And so it may happen that some angry and evil gaze, if it has been steadfastly fixed and directed upon a child, may so impress itself upon that child's memory and imagination that it may reflect itself in the gaze of the child, and actual results will follow, as, for example, he may lose his appetite and be unable to take food, he may sicken and fall ill. And sometimes we see that the sight of a man who is suffering from his eyes may cause the eyes of those who gaze upon him to dazzle and feel weak, although to a large extent this is nothing else but the effect of pure imagination. Several other examples of the same sort might be discussed here, but for the sake of conciseness we will not discuss them in any further detail.

All this is borne out of the commentators upon the Psalm, [Qui timent te uidebunt me](#). There is a great power in the eyes, and this appears even in natural things. For if a wolf see a man first, the man is struck dumb. Moreover, if a basilisk see a man first its look is fatal; but if he see it first he may be able to kill it; and the reason why the basilisk is able to kill a man by its gaze is because when it sees him, owing to its anger a certain terrible poison is set in motion throughout its body, and this it can dart from its eyes, thus injecting the atmosphere with deadly venom. And thus the man breathes in the air which it has infected and is stupefied and dies. But when the beast is first seen by the man, in a case when the man wishes to kill the basilisk, he furnishes himself with mirrors, and the beast seeing itself in the mirrors darts out poison towards its reflection, but the poison recoils and the animal dies. It does not seem plain, however, why the man who thus kills the basilisk should not die too, and we can only conclude that this is on account of some reason not clearly understood.

So far we have set down our opinions absolutely without prejudice and refraining from any hasty or rash judgement, not deviating from the teachings and writings of the Saints. We conclude, therefore, that the Catholic truth is this, that to bring about these evils which form the subject of discussion, witches and the devil always work together, and that in so far as these matters are concerned one can do nothing without the aid and assistance of the other.

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[Question II continued . . . .](#)

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*“Vincent.” Little is known of the personal history of this celebrated encyclopaedist. The years of his birth and death are uncertain, but the dates most frequently assigned are 1190 and 1264 respectively. It is thought that he joined the Dominicans in Paris shortly after 1218, and that he passed practically his whole life in his monastery in Beauvais, where he occupied himself incessantly upon his enormous work, the general title of which is “Speculum Maius,” containing 80 books, divided into 9885 chapters. The third part, “Speculum Historiale,” in 31 books and 3793 chapters, bring the History of the World down to A.D. 1250.*

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*“Zoroaster.” Pliny, “Historia Naturalis,” XXX, ii, says of magic: “Sine dubio illic orta in Perside a Zoroastre, ut inter auctores conuenit. Sed unus hic fuerit, an postea et alius, non satis constat.” Apuleius, “De Magia,” XXVI, mentions Zoroaster and Oromazus as the inventors of sorcery. “Adustrine magiam . . . artem esse dis immortalibus acceptam . . . a Zoroastro et Oromazo auctoribus suis nobilem, caelitum antistitam?”*

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“Cham.” “A.V.” Ham. Lenglet du Fresnoy in his “History of the Hematic Philosophy” repeats an old tradition: “Most alchemists pretended that Cham, or Chem, the son of Noe, was an adept in the art, and thought it highly probable that the words ‘Chemistry’ and ‘Alchemy’ are both derived from his name.” Lactantius, “De Origine Erroris,” II, says of the descendants of Cham: “Omnium primi qui Aegyptum occupauerunt; caelestia suspicere, atque adorare coeperunt.”

“Réalité de la Magie et des Apparitions,” Paris, 1819 (pp. xii-xiii), has: “Le monde, purgé par le déluge, fut repeuplé par les trois fils de Noé. Sem et Japhet imitèrent la vertu de leur père, et furent justes comme lui. Cham, au contraire, donna entrée au démon dans son coeur, remit au jour l’art exécration de la magie, en composa les règles, et en instruisit son fils Misraim.

“Cent trente ans après le déluge, Sem habitait la Perse. Ses enfans pratiquaient la religion naturelle, que Dieu mit dans le coeur du premier homme; et leurs vieillards se nommaient mages, qui veit dire “sages” en notre langue. Dans la suite, les descendans de Cham se partagèrent, et quelques-uns passèrent en Perse; Cham, qui vivait encore, était à leur tête. Il opéra tant de Zoroastre, c’est-à-dire, ‘astre vivant’; et transportèrent à ceux de sa secte le nom honorable de “mages,” que les adorateurs du vrai Dieu abandonnèrent, dès qui’ils le virent ainsi profané: et c’est de là que nous est venu le nom de ‘magie,’ pour signifier le culte du démon.

“Cham, ou Zoroastre, fut encore l’inventeur de l’astrologie judiciaire; il regarda les astres comme autant de divinités, et persuada aux hommes que tout leur destin dépendait de leurs bonnes ou mauvaises influences. Ainsi l’on commença à leur rendre un culte religieux, qui fut l’origine de l’idolâtrie. La Chaldée fut le premier théâtre de ces égaremens; et alors, ‘Chaldéen, astrologue et magicien’ étaient trius mots synonymes.”

*“Nembroth.” S. Augustine, “De Ciuitate Dei,” XVI, 3, quotes: “Chus autem genuit Nembroth hic coepit esse gigans super terram. Hic erat gigans uenator contra Dominum Deum.” Nembroth is the English Nimrod, who was considered a past master of magic, and even by later ages a demon. So we have: “Nembroth. Un des esprits que les magiciens consultent. Le mardi lui est consacré, et on l’évoque ce jour-là: il faut, pour le renvoyer, lui jeter une pierre; ce qui est facile.” Collin de Plancy (“Dictionnaire Infernal,” sixième édition, 1863).*

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*“Cast by the eyes.” In Ireland it was supposed that certain witches could cast a spell at a glance, and they were commonly called “eye-biting witches.”*

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*“On Sleep.” This is one of the smaller treatises connected with Aristotle's great work [“On the Soul”](#), .*

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*“Qui timent.” Psalm li, 8: Uidebunt iusti et timebunt.*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION II. - CONTINUED*

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We have already treated of this fascination. And now with reference to the second point, namely, that blood will flow from a corpse in the presence of a murderer. According to the *Speculum naturale* of Vincent of Beauvis, c. 13, the wound is, as it were, influenced by the mind of the murderer, and that wound receives a certain atmosphere which has been impressed by and is permeated with his violence and hatred, and when the murderer draws near, the blood wells up and gushes forth from the corpse. For it would seem that this atmosphere, which was cause and as it were entered the wound owing to the murderer, at his presence is disturbed and greatly moved, and it is owing to this movement that the blood streams out of the dead body. There are some who declared that it is due to some other causes, and they say that this gushing forth of blood is the voice of the blood crying from the earth against the murderer who is present, and that this is on account of the curse pronounced against the murderer Cain. And with regard to that horror which a person feels when he is passing near the corpse of a man who has been murdered, although he may not be in any way cognizant of the vicinity of a dead body, this horror is psychic, it infects the atmosphere and conveys a thrill of fear to the mind. But all these explanations, be it noted, do not in any way affect the truth of the evil wrought by witches, since they are all perfectly natural and arise from natural causes.

In the third place, as we have already said above, the operations and rites of witches are placed in that second category of superstition which is called Divination; and of this divination there are three kinds, but the argument does not hold good with reference to the third kind, which belongs to a different species, for witchcraft is not merely any divination, but it is that divination, the operations of which are performed by express and explicit invocations of the devil; and this may be done in very many ways, as by Necromancy, Geomancy, Hydromancy, etc.

Wherefore this divination, which is used when they are working their spells, must be judged to be the height of criminal wickedness, although some have attempted to regard it from another point of view. And they argue thus, that as we do not know the hidden powers of nature, it may be that the witches are merely employing or seeking to employ these hidden powers: assuredly if they are employing the natural power of natural things to bring about a natural effect, this must be perfectly lawful, as indeed is obvious enough. Or even let us conceive that if the superstitiously employ natural things, as, for example, by writing down certain characters or unknown names of some kind, and that then they use these runes for restoring a person to health, or for inducing friendship, or with some useful end, and not at all for doing any damage or harm, in such cases, it may be granted, I say, that there is no express invocation of demons; nevertheless it cannot be that these spells are employed without a tacit invocation, wherefore all such charms must be judged to be wholly unlawful.

And because these and many other charms like to them may be placed in the third category of superstition, that is to say, idle and vain observing of time and seasons, this is by no means a

relevant argument as to the heresy of witches. But of this category, the observing of times and seasons, there are four distinct species: A man may use such observations to acquire certain knowledge: or he may in this way seek to inform himself concerning lucky or unlucky days and things: or he may use sacred words and prayers as a charm with no reference to their meaning: or he may intend and desire to bring about some beneficial change in some body. All this S. Thomas has amply treated in that question where he asks, Whether such observing be lawful, especially if it be to bring about a beneficial change in a body, that is to say, the restoration of persons to health. But when witches observe times and seasons, their practices must be held to belong to the second kind of superstition, and therefore, in so far as they are concerned, questions concerning this third class are wholly impertinent.

We now proceed to a fourth proposition, inasmuch as from observations of the kind we have discussed certain charts and images are wont to be made, but these are of two separate sorts, which differ entirely one from the other; and these are Astronomical and Necromantic. Now in Necromancy there is always an express and particular invocation of demons, for this craft implies that there has been an express compact and contract with them. Let us therefore only consider Astrology. In Astrology there is no compact, and therefore there is no invocation, unless by chance there be some kind of tacit invocation, since the figures of demons and their names sometimes appear in Astrological charts. And again, Necromantic signs are written under the influence of certain stars in order to counteract the influence and oppositions of other heavenly bodies, and these are inscribed, for signs and characters of this kind are often engraved upon rings, gems, or some other precious metal, but magic signs are engraved without any reference to the influence of the stars, and often upon any substance, nay, even upon vile and sordid substances, which when buried in certain places bring about damage and harm and disease. But we are discussing charts which are made with reference to the stars. And these Necromantic charts and images have no reference to any heavenly body. Therefore a consideration of them does not enter into the present discussion.

Moreover, many of these images which have been made with superstitious rites have no efficacy at all, that is to say, in so far as the fashioning of them is concerned, although it may be that the material of which they are made does possess a certain power, although this is not due to the fact that they were made under the influence of certain stars. Yet many hold that it is in any case unlawful to make use even of images like these. But the images made by witches have no natural power at all, nor has the material of which they are formed any power; but they fashion such images by command of the devil, that by so doing they may, as it were, mock the work of the Creator, and that they may provoke Him to anger so that in punishment of their misdeeds He may suffer plagues to fall upon the earth. And in order to increase their guilt they delight especially to fashion many such images at the more solemn seasons of the year.

With regard to the fifth point, S. Gregory is there speaking of the power of grace and not of the power of nature. And since, as S. John says, we are born of God, what wonder then that the sons of God enjoy extraordinary powers.

With regard to the last point we will say this, that a mere likeness is irrelevant, because the influence of one's own mind on one's own body is different from its influence upon another body as though the body were the material form of the mind, and the emotions are an act of the body, but separate, therefore the emotion can be changed by the influence of the mind whensoever there is some bodily change, heat or cold, or any alteration, even to death itself. But to change the actual body, no act of the mind is sufficient by itself, unless there can be some physical result which alters the body. Whence witches, by the exercise of no natural power, but only by the help of the

devil, are able to bring about harmful effects. And the devils themselves can only do this by the use of material objects as their instruments, such as bones, hair, wood, iron, and all sorts of objects of this kind, concerning which operation we shall treat more fully a little later.

Now with regard to the tenor of the Bull of our Most Holy Father the Pope, we will discuss the origin of witches, and how it is that of recent years their works have so multiplied among us. And it must be borne in mind that for this to take place, three things concur, the devil, the witch, and the permission of God who suffers such things to be. For S. Augustine says, that the abomination of witchcraft arose from this foul connexion of mankind with the devil. Therefore it is plain that the origin and the increase of this heresy arises from this foul connexion, a fact which many authors approve.

We must especially observe that this heresy, witchcraft, not only differs from all other heresy in this, that not merely by a tacit compact, but by a compact which is exactly defined and expressed it blasphemes the Creator and endeavours to the utmost to profane Him and to harm His creatures, for all other simple heresies have made no open compact with the devil, no compact, that is, either tacit or exactly expressed, although their errors and misbelief are directly to be attributed to the Father of errors and lies. Moreover, witchcraft differs from all other harmful and mysterious arts in this point, that of all superstition it is essentially the vilest, the most evil and the worst, wherefore it derives its name from doing evil, and from blaspheming the true faith.

*(Melaficae dictae a Melficiendo, seu a male de fide sentiendo.)*

Let us especially note too that in the practice of this abominable evil, four points in particular are required. First, most profanely to renounce the Catholic Faith, or at any rate to deny certain dogmas of the faith; secondly, to devote themselves body and soul to all evil; thirdly, to offer up unbaptized children to Satan; fourthly, to indulge in every kind of carnal lust with Incubi and Succubi and all manner of filthy delights.

Would to God that we might suppose all this to be untrue and merely imaginary, if only our Holy Mother the Church were free from the leprosy of such abomination. Alas, the judgement of the Apostolic See, who is alone the Mistress and the Teacher of all truth, that judgement, I say, which has been expressed in the Bull of our Holy Father the Pope, assures us and makes us aware that amongst us, and we dare not refrain from inquiring into them lest we imperil our own salvation. And therefore we must discuss at length the origin and the increase of these abominations; it has been a work of much labour indeed, and we trust that every detail will most exactly and carefully be weighed by those who read this book, for herein will be found nothing contrary to sound reason, nothing which differs from the words of Scripture and the tradition of the Fathers.

Now there are two circumstances which are certainly very common at the present day, that is to say, the connexion of witches with familiars, Incubi and Succubi, and the horrible sacrifices of small children. Therefore we shall particularly deal with these matters, so that in the first place we shall discuss these demons themselves, secondly, the witches and their works, and thirdly, we will inquire wherefore such things are suffered to be. Now these demons work owing to their influence upon man's mind and upon his free will, and they choose to copulate under the influence of certain stars rather than under the influence of others, for it would seem that at certain times their semen can more easily generate and beget children. Accordingly, we must inquire why the demons should act at the conjunction of certain stars, and what times these are.

There are three chief points to discuss. First, whether the abominable heresies can be multiplied throughout the world by those who give themselves to Incubi and Succubi. Secondly,

whether their actions have not a certain extraordinary power when performed under the influence of certain stars. Thirdly, whether this abominable heresy is not widely spread by those who profanely sacrifice children to Satan. Moreover, when we have discussed the second point, before we proceed to the third, we must consider the influence of the stars, and what power they have in acts of witchcraft.

With regard to the first question there are three difficulties which need elucidation.

The first is a general consideration of these demons, which are called Incubi.

The second question is more particular, for we must inquire, How can these Incubi perform the human act of copulation?

The third question is also a special one, How do witches bind themselves to and copulate with these devils?

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### [Question III](#)

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION III.*

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*Whether children can be generated by Incubi and Succubi.*

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At first it may truly seem that it is not in accordance with the Catholic Faith to maintain that children can be begotten by devils, that is to say, by [Incubi](#) and Succubi: for God Himself, before sin came into the world, instituted human procreation, since He created woman from the rib of man to be a helpmeet unto man: And to them He said: Increase, and multiply, *Genesis* ii, 24. Likewise after sin had come into the world, it was said to Noe: Increase, and multiply, *Genesis* ix, 1. In the time of the new law also, Christ confirmed this union: Have ye not read, that he who made man from the beginning, *Made them male and female?* *S. Matthew* xix, 4. Therefore, men cannot be begotten in any other way than this.

But it may be argued that devils take their part in this generation not as the essential cause, but as a secondary and artificial cause, since they busy themselves by interfering with the process of normal copulation and conception, by obtaining human semen, and themselves transferring it.

*Objection.* The devil can perform this act in every state of life, that is to say, in the matrimonial state, or not in the matrimonial state. Now he cannot perform it in the first state, because then the act of the devil would be more powerful than the act of God, Who instituted and confirmed this holy estate, since it is a state of continence and wedlock. Nor can he effect this in any other estate: since we never read in Scripture that children can be begotten in one state and not in another.

Moreover, to beget a child is the act of a living body, but devils cannot bestow life upon the bodies which they assume; because life formally only proceeds from the soul, and the act of generation is the act of the physical organs which have bodily life. Therefore bodies which are assumed in this way cannot either beget or bear.

Yet it may be said that these devils assume a body not in order that they may bestow life upon it, but that they may by the means of this body preserve human semen, and pass the semen on to another body.

*Objection.* As in the action of angels, whether they be good or bad, there is nothing superfluous and useless, nor is there anything superfluous and useless in nature. But the devil by his natural power, which is far greater than any human bodily power, can perform any spiritual action, and perform it again and again although man may not be able to discern it. Therefore he is able to perform this action, although man may not be able to discern when the devil is concerned therewith. For all bodily and material things are on a lower scale than pure and spiritual intelligences. But the angels, whether they be good or whether they be evil, are pure and spiritual intelligences. Therefore they can control what is below them. Therefore the devil can collect and make use as he will of human semen which belongs to the body.



However, to collect human semen from one person and to transfer it to another implies certain local actions. But devils cannot locally move bodies from place to place. And this is the argument they put forward. The soul is purely a spiritual essence, so is the devil: but the soul cannot move a body from place to place except it be that body in which it lives and to which it gives life: whence if any member of the body perishes it becomes dead and immovable. Therefore devils cannot move a body from place to place, except it be a body to which they give life. It has been shown, however, and is acknowledged that devils do not bestow life on anybody, therefore they cannot move human semen locally, that is, from place to place, from body to body.

Moreover, every action is performed by contact, and especially the act of generation. But it does not seem possible that there can be any contact between the demon and human bodies, since he has not actual point of contact with them. Therefore he cannot inject semen into a human body, and therefore since this needs a certain bodily action, it would seem that the devil cannot accomplish it.

Besides, devils have no power to move those bodies which in a natural order are more closely related to them, for example the heavenly bodies, therefore they have no power to move those bodies which are more distant and distinct from them. The major is proved, since the power that moves and the movement are one and the same thing according to Aristotle in his *Physics*. It follows, therefore, that devils who move heavenly bodies must be in heaven, which is wholly untrue, both in our opinion, and in the opinion of the Platonists.

Moreover, S. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, III, says that devils do indeed collect human semen, by means of which they are able to produce bodily effects; but this cannot be done without some local movement, therefore demons can transfer semen which they have collected and inject it into the bodies of others. But, as Walafrid Strabo says in his commentary upon *Exodus* vii, II: And Pharaoh called the wise men and the magicians: Devils go about the earth collecting every sort of seed, and can by working upon them broadcast various species. See also the gloss on those words (Pharaoh called). And again in *Genesis* vi the gloss makes two comments on the words: And the sons of God saw the daughters of men. First, that by the sons of God are meant the sons of Seth, and by the daughters of men, the daughters of Cain. Second, that Giants were created not by some incredibly act of men, but by certain devils, which are shameless towards women. For the Bible says, Giants were upon the earth. Moreover, even after the Flood the bodies not only of men, but also of women, were pre-eminently and incredibly beautiful.

*Answer.* For the sake of brevity much concerning the power of the devil and his works in the matter of the effects of witchcraft is left out; for the pious reader either accepts it as proved, or he may, if he wish to inquire, find every point clearly elucidated in the second *Book of Sentences*, 5. For he will see that the devils perform all their works consciously and voluntarily; for the nature that was given them has not been changed. See [Dionysius](#) in his fourth chapter on the subject; their nature remained intact and very splendid, although they cannot use it for any good purpose.

And as to their intelligence, he will find that they excel in three points of understanding, in their age-long experience, and in the revelation of the higher spirits. He will find also how, through the influence of the stars, they learn the dominating characteristics of men, and so discover that some are more disposed to work witchcraft than others, and that they molest these chiefly for the purpose of such works.

And as to their will, the reader will find that it cleaves unchangeably to evil, and that they continuously sin in pride, envy, and gross covetousness; and that God, for his own glory, permits them to work against His will. He will also understand how with these two qualities of intellect

and will devils do marvels, so that there is no power in earth which can be compared to them: *Job xli*. There is no power on the earth which can be compared with him, who was created that he should fear no one. But here the gloss says, Although he fears no one he is yet subject to the merits of the Saints.

He will find also how the devil knows the thoughts of our hearts; how he can substantially and disastrously metamorphose bodies with the help of an agent; how he can move bodies locally, and alter the outward and inner feelings to every conceivable extent; and how he can change the intellect and will of a man, however indirectly.

For although all this is pertinent to our present inquiry, we wish only to draw some conclusion therefrom as to that nature of devils, and so proceed to the discussion of our question.

Now the Theologians have ascribed to them certain qualities, as that they are unclean spirits, yet not by very nature unclean. For according to Dionysius there is in them a natural madness, a rabid concupiscence, a wanton fancy, as is seen from their spiritual sins of pride, envy, and wrath. For this reason they are the enemies of the human race: rational in mind, but reasoning without words; subtle in wickedness, eager to hurt; ever fertile in fresh deceptions, they change the perceptions and befoul the emotions of men, they confound the watchful, and in dreams disturb the sleeping; they bring diseases, stir up tempests, disguise themselves as angels of light, bear Hell always about them; from witches they usurp to themselves the worship of God, and by this means magic spells are made; they seek to get a mastery over the good, and molest them to the most of their power; to the elect they are given as a temptation, and always they lie in wait for the destruction of men.

And although they have a thousand ways of doing harm, and have tried ever since their downfall to bring about schisms in the Church, to disable charity, to infect with the gall of envy the sweetness of the acts of the Saints, and in every way to subvert and perturb the human race; yet their power remains confined to the privy parts and the navel. See *Job xli*. For through the wantonness of the flesh they have much power over men; and in men the source of wantonness lies in the privy parts, since it is from them that the semen falls, just as in women it falls from the navel.

These things, then, being granted for a proper understanding of the question of Incubi and Succubi, it must be said that it is just as Catholic a view to hold that men may at times be begotten by means of Incubi and Succubi, as it is contrary to the words of the Saints and even to the tradition of Holy Scripture to maintain the opposite opinion. And this is proved as follows. S. Augustine in one place raises this question, not indeed as regards witches, but with reference to the very works of devils, and to the fables of the poets, and leave the matter in some doubt; though later on he is definite in the matter of Holy Scripture. For in his *De Ciuitate Dei*, Book 3, chapter 2, he says: We leave open the question whether it was possible for Venus to give birth to Aeneas through coition with Anchises. For a similar question arises in the Scriptures, where it is asked whether evil angels lay with the daughters of men, and thereby the earth was then filled with giants, that is to say, preternaturally big and strong men. But he settles the question in Book 5, chapter 23, in these words: It is a very general belief, the truth of which is vouched for by many from their own experience, or at least from heresay as having been experienced by men of undoubted trustworthiness, that Satyrs and Fauns (which are commonly called Incubi) have appeared to wanton women and have sought and obtained coition with them. And that certain devils (which the Gauls call Dusii) assiduously attempt and achieve this filthiness is vouched for by so many credible witness that it would seem impudent to deny it.

Later in the same book he settles the second contention, namely, that the passage in Genesis

about the sons of God (that is Seth) and the daughters of men (that is Cain) does not speak only of Incubi, since the existence of such is not credible. In this connexion there is the gloss which we have touched upon before. He says that it is not outside belief that the Giants of whom the Scripture speaks were begotten not by men, but by Angels or certain devils who lust after women. To the same effect is the gloss in [Esaias xiii](#), where the prophet foretells the desolation of Babylon, and the monsters that should inhabit it. He says: Owls shall dwell there, and Satyrs shall dance there. By Satyrs here devils are meant; as the gloss says, Satyrs are wild shaggy creatures of the woods, which are a certain kind of devils called Incubi. And again in *Esaias xxxiv*, where he prophesies the desolation of the land of the Idumeans because they persecuted the Jews, he says: And it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. The wild beasts also of the desert shall meet . . . The interlinear gloss interprets this as monsters and devils. And in the same place Blessed Gregory explains these to be woodland gods under another name, not those which the Greeks called Pans, and the Latins Incubi.

Similarly Blessed Isidore, in the last chapter of his 8th book, says: Satyrs are they who are called Pans in Greek and Incubi in Latin. And they are called Incubi from their practice of [overlaying](#), that is debauching. For they often lust lecherously after women, and copulate with them; and the Gauls name them [Dusii](#), because they are diligent in this beastliness. But the devil which the common people call an Incubus, the Romans called [a fig Faun](#); to which Horace said, “O Faunus, love of fleeing nymphs, go gently over my lands and smiling fields.”

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### [Question III Continued . . . .](#)

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*“Incubi.” For a very full discussion of the whole subject see Sinistrari's “Demoniality” with my Commentary and glosses, Fortune Press, 1927.*

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*“Dionysius.” A series of famous writings attributed to S. Dionysius the Areopagite (“Acts” xvii, 34), who was also popularly identified with the Martyr of Gaul, the first Bishop of Paris. The writings themselves form a collection of four treatises and ten letters. These will all be found in Migne, “Patres Graeci,” III. The treatises are generally referred to under their Latin names, “De Diuinis nominibus”; “Caelestis heirarchia”; “Ecclesiastica hierarchia”; “Theologia mystica.” The main source from which the Middle Ages obtained a knowledged of Dionysius and his doctrine was undoubtedly the Latin translation by Scotus Eriugena, made bout 858. There are ample commentaries by many great writers such as Hugh of Saint-Victor, Blessed Alburtus Magnus, S. Thomas, and Denys the Carthusian. The works of Dionysius the Aeropagite and the identification of this writer with S. Denys were accepts by Saints and Schoolmen, and perhaps we should do well to follow them without curious questions and impertinent discussion.*

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*“Esaias.” See my gloss upon this passage, “Demoniality,” Introduction, xxvi-xxviii.*

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*“Overlaying.” Nider, “Formicarius,” ix, writes: “Incubi dicuntur ab incumbendo, hoc est struprando.”*

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*“Dusii.” “De Ciuitate Dei,” XV, 23, where S. Augustine has: “Et quosdam daemones, quos Dusios Galli nuncupant, adsidue hanc immunditiam et efficere, plures talesque adseuerant, ut hoc negare impudentiae uideatur.”*

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“A Fig Faun.” “Jeremias” l, 39, the desolation of Babylon, has: *Propterea habitabunt dracones cum faunis ficariis: et habitabunt in ea struthiones: et non inhabitabitur ultra usque in sempiternum, nec exstruetur uque ad generationem, et generationem.* Which Douay translates: “Therefore shall dragons dwell there with the fig fauns: and ostriches shall dwell therein, and it shall be no more inherited for ever, neither shall it be built up from generation to generation.” The English gloss says: “‘Fig fauns.’ Monsters of the desert, or demons in monstrous shapes: such as the ancients called ‘fauns’ and ‘satyrs’: and as they imagined them to live upon wild figs, they called them ‘fauni ficarii’ or ‘fig fauns.’” Mirabeau, “*Erotika Biblion*” (pseudo-Rome), 1783, under “Béhémah” writes: “Les satyrs, les faunes, les égyptiens, toutes ces fables en sont une tradition très remarquable. Satan en arabe signifie bouc; et le bouc expiatoire ne fut ordonné par Moïse que pour détourner les Israélites du goût qu’ils avoient pour cet animal lascif. (Maimonide dans le *More Nevochin*, p. III, c. xlvi, s’étend sur les cultes des boucs). Comme il est dit dans l’Exode qu’on ne pouvoit voir la face des dieux, les Israélites étoient persuadés que les démons si faisoient voir sous cette forme. . . . On a enquite confondu les incubes et les succubes avec les véritables produits. Jérémie parle de faunes suffoquans. (Jérém., l, 39. *Faunis sicariis et non pas ficariis.* Car des faunes qui avoient des figues ne voudroit n’en dire. Cependant Saci la traduit ainsi; car les Jansénistes affectent la plus grande pureté des moeurs, mais Berruyer soutient le ‘Sicarii’ et rend ses faunes très actifs.) Héraclite a décrit des satyres qui vivoient dans les bois, et jouissoient en commun des femmes dont ils s’emparoiient.” But the Vulgate has “*Fauni ficarii,*” which settles the point. That the reading was very disputed is clear from Nider, “*Formicarius,*” who has: “*Quem autem uulgo Incubonem uocant, hunc Romani uicarium dicunt. Ad quem Horatius dicit: Faune Nympharum fugientium amator meos per fines et aprica rura lenis incedas. Insuper illud Apostoli I Cor. xi. Mulier debet uelamen habere super caput suum propter Angelos: Multi Catholici exponunt quod sequitur, propter angelos, id est Incubos.*” The quotation from Horace is “*Carminum,*” III, 18.

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## PART I. QUESTION III CONTINUED . . . .

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As to that of S. Paul in I. *Corinthians* xi, A woman ought to have a covering on her head, because of the angels, many Catholics believe that “because of the angels” refers to Incubi. Of the same opinion is the Venerable Bede in his [History of the English](#); also [William of Paris](#) in his book *De Uniuerso*, the last part of the 6th treatise. Moreover, S. Thomas speaks of this (I. 25 and II. 8, and elsewhere; also on *Esaias* xii and xiv). Therefore he says that it is rash to deny such things. For that which appears true to many cannot be altogether false, according to Aristotle (at the end of the *De somno et uigilia*, and in the 2nd *Ethics*). I say nothing of the many authentic histories, both Catholic and heathen, which openly affirm the existence of Incubi.

But the reason the devils turn themselves into Incubi or Succubi is not for the cause of pleasure, since a spirit has not flesh and blood; but chiefly it is with this intention, that through the vice of luxury they may work a twofold harm against men, that is, in body and in soul, that so men may be more given to all vices. And there is no doubt that they know under which stars the semen is most vigorous, and that men so conceived will be always perverted by witchcraft.

When Almighty God had enumerated many vice of luxury rife among the unbelievers and heretics, from which He wished His people to be clean, He says in *Leviticus* xviii: Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it. The gloss explains the word “nations” as meaning devils who, on account of their multitude, are call the nations of the world, and rejoice in all sin, especially in fornication and idolatry, because by these are defiled the body and the soul, and the whole man, which is called “the land.” For every sin that a man commits is outside his body, but the man who commits fornication sins in his body. If anyone wishes to study further the histories concerning Incubi and Succubi, let him read (as has been said) Bede in his *History of the English*, and William, and finally Thomas of Brabant in his book *About Bees*.

To return to the matter in hand. And first for the natural act of propagation instituted by God, that is, between male and female; that as though by the permission of God the Sacrament of Matrimony can be made void by the work of the devil through witchcraft, as has been shown above. And the same is much more strongly true of any other venereal act between man and woman.

But if it is asked why the devil is allowed to case spells upon the venereal act, rather than upon any other human act, it is answered that many reasons are assigned by the Doctors, which will be discussed later in the part concerning the divine permission. For the present that reason that has been mentioned before must suffice, namely, that the power of the devil lies in the privy parts of men. For of all struggles those are the harder where the fight is continuous and victory rare. And it is unsound to argue that in that case the work of the devil is stronger than the work of God, since the matrimonial act instituted by God can be made void: for the devil does not make it void by

violence, since he has no power at all in the matter except as he is permitted by God. Therefore it would be better to argue from this that he is powerless.

Secondly, it is true that to procreate a man is the act of a living body. But when it is said that devils cannot give life, because that flows formally from the soul, it is true; but materially life springs from the semen, and an Incubus devil can, with God's permission, accomplish this by coition. And the semen does not so much spring from him, as it is another man's semen received by him for this purpose (see S. Thomas, I. 51, art. 3). For the devil is Succubus to a man, and becomes Incubus to a woman. In just the same way they absorb the seeds of other things for the generating of various thing, as S. Augustine says, *de Trinitate* 3.

Now it may be asked, of whom is a child born the son? It is clear that he is not the son of the devil, but of the man whose semen was received. But when it is urged that, just as in the works of Nature, so there is no superfluity in the works of angels, that is granted; but when it is inferred that the devil can receive and inject semen invisibly, this also is true; but he prefers to perform this visibly as a Succubus and an Incubus, that by such filthiness he may infect body and soul of all humanity, that is, of both woman and man, there being, as it were, actual bodily contact.

Moreover, devils can do invisibly more things which they are not permitted to do visibly, even if they so wished; but they are allowed to do them invisibly, either as a trial for the good, or as a punishment for the wicked. Finally, it may happen that another devil may take the place of the Succubus, receive the semen from him, and become an Incubus in the place of the other devil; and this for a threefold reason. Perhaps because one devil, allotted to a woman, should receive semen from another devil, allotted to a man, that in this way each of them should be commissioned by the prince of devils to work some witchcraft; since, to each one is allotted his own angel, even from among the evil ones; or because of the filthiness of the deed, which one devil would abhor to commit. For in many inquiries it is clearly shown that certain devils, out of some nobility in their natures, would shrink from a filthy action. Or it may be in order that the Incubus may, instead of a man's semen, but interposing himself on to a woman, invisibly inject his own semen, that is, that which he has invisibly received. And it is not foreign to his nature or power to effect such an interposition; since even in bodily form he can interpose himself invisibly and without physical contact, as was shown in the case of young man who has betrothed to an idol.

Thirdly, it is said that the power of an angel belongs in an infinite degree to the higher things; that is to say, that his power cannot be comprehended by the lower orders, but is always superior to them, so that it is not limited to one effect only. For the highest powers have most unbounded influence over creation. But because he is said to be infinitely superior, that is not to say that he is indifferently powerful for any work that is propounded for him; for then he might just as well be said to be infinitely inferior, as superior.

But there must be some proportion between the agent and the patient, and there can be no proportion between a purely spiritual substance and a corporeal one. Therefore not even the devils have any power to cause an effect, except through some other active medium. And this is why they use the seeds of things to produce their effects; see S. Augustine, *de Trinitate*, 3. Wherefore this argument goes back to the preceding one, and is not strengthened by it, unless anyone wishes for S. Augustine's explanation why the Intelligences are said to have infinite powers of the higher and not of the lower degree, given to them in the order of things corporeal and of the celestial bodies, which can influence many and infinite effects. But this is not because of the weakness of the inferior powers. And the conclusion is that devils, even without assuming bodies, can work transmutations in semen; although this is no argument against the present proposition, concerning Incubi and Succubi, whose actions they cannot perform except by assuming bodily shape, as has

been considered above.

For the fourth argument, that devils cannot move bodies or semen locally, which is substantiated by the analogy of the soul. It must be said that it is one thing to speak of the spiritual substance of the actual angel or devil, and another thing to speak of the actual soul. For the reason why the soul cannot locally move a body unless it has given life to it, or else by contact of a living body with one that is not living, is this: that the soul occupies by far the lowest grade in the order of spiritual beings, and therefore it follows that there must be some proportionate relation between it and the body which it is able to move by contact. But it is not so with devils, whose power altogether exceeds corporeal power.

And fifthly, it must be said that the contact of a devil with a body, either in the way of semen or in any other way, is not a corporeal but a virtual contact, and takes place in accordance with the suitable proportion of the devil's power. And such bodies are the celestial bodies, and even the whole earth or the elements of the world, the power of which we may call superior on the authority of S. Thomas in his questions concerning Sin (quest. 10, *de Daemonibus*). For this is either because of the essence of nature, or because of condemnation for sin. For there is a due order in things, in accordance both with their very nature and with their motion. And just as the higher heavenly bodies are moved by the higher spiritual substances, as are the good Angels, so are the lower bodies moved by the lower spiritual substances, as are the devils. And if this limitation of the devils' power is due to the essence of nature, it is held by some that the devils are not of the order of those higher angels, but are part of this terrestrial order created by God; and this was the opinion of the Philosophers. And if it is due to condemnation for sin, as is held by the Theologians, then they were thrust from the regions of heaven into this lower atmosphere for a punishment, and therefore are not able to move either it or the earth.

This has been said on account of two easily dispelled arguments: - One, regarding the heavenly bodies, that the devils could also move these, if they were able to move bodies locally, since the stars are neared to them in nature, as also the last argument alleges. The answer is that this is not valid; for if the former opinion holds good, those bodies exceed the proportion of the devils' power: and if the second is true, then again they cannot move them, because of their punishment for sin.

Also there is the argument that objects that the motion of the whole and of the part is the same thing, just as Aristotle in his 4th *Physics* instances the case of the whole earth and a clod of soil; and that therefore if the devils could move a part of the earth, they could also move the whole earth. But this is not valid, as is clear to anyone who examines the distinction. But to collect the semen of things and apply it to certain effects does not exceed their natural power, with the permission of God, as is self-evident.

In conclusion, in spite of the contention of some that devils in bodily shape can in no way generate children, and that by the "sons of God" is meant the descendants of Cain; nevertheless the contrary is clearly affirmed by many. And that which seems true to many cannot be altogether false, according to Aristotle in his 6th *Ethics* and at the end of the *de Somno et Uigilia*. And now also in modern times we have the well-attested deeds and words of witches who truly and actually perform such things.

Therefore we make three propositions. First, that the foulest venereal acts are performed by such devils, not for the sake of delectation, but for the pollution of the souls and bodies of those to whom they act as Succubi and Incubi. Second, that through such action complete contraception and generation by women can take place, inasmuch as they can deposit human semen in the suitable place of a woman's womb where there is already a corresponding substance. In the same

way they can also collect the seeds of other things for the working of their effects. Third, that in the begetting of such children only the local motion is to be attributed to devils, and not the actual begetting, which arises not from the power of the devil or of the body which he assumes, but from the virtue of him whose semen it was; wherefore the child is the son not of the devil, but of some man.

And here there is a clear answer to those who would contend that there are two reasons why devils cannot generate children: - First, that generation is effected by the formative virtue which exists in semen released from a living body; and that because the body assumed by devils is not of such a sort, therefore, etc. The answer is clear, that the devil deposits naturally formative semen in its proper place, etc. Secondly, it may be argued that semen has no power of generation except as long as the heat of life is retained in it, and that this must be lost when it is carried great distances. The answer is that devils are able to store the semen safely, so that its vital heat is not lost; or even that it cannot evaporate so easily on account of the great speed at which they move by reason of the superiority of the move over the thing moved.

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## [Question IV](#)

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*“Bede.” Born 672 or 673, died 735. This great work, “Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum,” giving an account of Christianity in England from the beginning until his own day, has been recognized as a masterpiece by the scholars of all ages and countries. An authoritative edition was published by Plummer, two vols., Oxford, 1896.*

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*“William of Paris.” William of Auvergne, was born at Aurillac in Auvergne towards the end of the twelfth century, and died at Paris, of which city he had in 1228 been consecrated Bishop, in 1249. Although not a “Summa Theologica,” his “de Universo” is a practical endeavour to found a science of reality on principles opposed to those of the Arabian commentators upon and perverters of Aristotle. His theological works are particularly interesting as devoting much attention to a refutation of the Manichees, whose heresies had been recently revived. There is a good study by Valois, “Guillaume d’Auvergne,” Paris, 1880.*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION IV.*

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*By which Devils are the Operations of Incubus and Succubus Practised?*

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Is it Catholic to affirm that the functions of Incubi and Succubi belong indifferently and equally to all unclean spirits? *And it seems* that it is so; for to affirm the opposite would be to maintain that there is some good order among them. It is argued that just as in the computation of the Good there are degrees and orders (see S. Augustine in his book on the nature of the Good), so also the computation of the Evil is based upon confusion. But as among the good Angels nothing can be without order, so among the bad all is disorder, and therefore they all indifferently follows these practices. See *Job x.*: A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.

Again, if they do not all indifferently follow these practices, this quality in them comes either from their nature, or from sin, or from punishment. But it does not come from their nature, since they are all without distinction given to sin, as was set out in the preceding question. For they are by nature impure spirits, yet not so unclean as to pejorate their good parts; subtle in wickedness, eager to do harm, swollen with pride, etc. Therefore these practices in them are due either to sin or to punishment. Then again, where the sin is greater, there is the punishment greater; and the higher angels sinned more greatly, therefore their punishment they have the more to follow these filthy practices. If this is not so, another reason will be given why they do not indifferently practise these things.

And again, it is argued that where there is no discipline or obedience, there all work without distinction; and it is submitted that there is no discipline or obedience among devils, and no agreement. *Proverbs xiii.*: Among the proud there is always contention.

Again, just as because of sin they will all equally be case into Hell after the Day of Judgement, so before that time they are detained in the lower mists on account of the duties assigned to them. We do not read that there is equality on account of emancipation, therefore neither is there equality in the matter of duty and temptation.

But *against* this there is the first gloss on *I Corinthians xv*: As long as the world endures Angels are set over Angels, men over men, and devils over devils. Also in *Job xl* it speaks of the scales of Leviathan, which signify the members of the devil, how one cleaves to another. Therefore there is among them diversity both of order and of action.

Another question arises, whether or not the devils can be restrained by the good Angels from pursuing these foul practices. It must be said that the Angels to whose command the adverse Influences are subject are called Powers, as S. Gregory says, and S. Augustine (*de Trinitate*, 3). A rebellious and sinful spirit of life is subject to an obedient, pious and just spirit of life. And those Creatures which are more perfect and nearer to God have authority over the others: for the whole order of preference is originally and in the first place in God, and is shared by His creatures



according as they approach more nearly to Him. Therefore the good Angels, who are nearest to God on account of their fruition in Him, which the devils lack, have preference over the devils, and rule over them.

And when it is urged that devils work much harm without any medium, or that they are not hindered because they are not subject to good Angels who might prevent them; or that if they are so subject, then the evil that is done by the subject is due to negligence on the part of the master, and there seems to be some negligence among the good Angels: the answer is that the Angels are ministers of the Divine wisdom. It follows then that, as the Divine wisdom permits certain evil to be done by bad Angels or men, for the sake of the good that He draws therefrom, so also the good Angels do not altogether prevent wicked men or devils from doing evil.

*Answer.* It is Catholic to maintain that there is a certain order of interior and exterior actions, and a degree of preference among devils. Whence it follows that certain abominations are committed by the lowest orders, from which the higher orders are precluded on account of the nobility of their natures. And this is generally said to arise from a threefold congruity, in that such things harmonize with their nature, with the Divine wisdom, and with their own wickedness.

But more particularly as touching their nature. It is agreed that from the beginning of Creation some were always by nature superior, since they differ among themselves as to form; and no two Angels are alike in form. This follows the more general opinion, which also agrees with the words of the Philosophers. Dionysus also lays it down in his tenth chapter *On the Celestial Hierarchy* that in the same order there are three separate degrees; and we must agree with this, since they are both immaterial and incorporeal. See also S. Thomas (ii. 2). For sin does not take away their nature, and the devils after the Fall did not lose their natural gifts, as has been said before; and the operations of things follow their natural conditions. Therefore both in nature and in operation they are various and multiple.

This harmonizes also with the Divine wisdom; for that which is ordained is ordained by God (*Romans* xiii). And since devils were deputed by God for the temptation of men and the punishment of the damned, therefore they work upon men from without by many and various means.

It harmonizes also with their own wickedness. For since they are at war with the human race, they fight in an orderly manner; for so they think to do greater harm to men, and so they do. Whence it follows that they do not share in an equal manner in their most unspeakable abominations.

And this is more specifically proved as follows. For since, as has been said, the operation follows the nature of the thing, it follows also that those whose natures are subordinate must in turn be subordinate to themselves in operation, just as is the case in corporeal matters. For since the lower bodies are by natural ordination below the celestial bodies, and their actions and motions are subject to the actions and motions of the celestial bodies; and since the devils, as has been said, differ among themselves in natural order; therefore they also differ among themselves in their natural actions, both extrinsic and intrinsic, and especially in the performance of the abominations in question.

From which it is concluded that since the practice of these abominations is for the most part foreign to the nobility of the angelic nature, so also in human actions the foulest and beastliest acts are to be considered by themselves, and not in relation to the duty of human nature and procreation.

Finally, since some are believed to have fallen from every order, it is not unsuitable to maintain that those devils who fell from the lowest choir, and even in that held the lowest rank, are

deputed to and perform these and other abominations.

Also it must be carefully noted that, though the Scripture speaks of Incubi and Succubi lusting after women, yet nowhere do we read that Incubi and Succubi fell into vices against nature. We do not speak only of sodomy, but of any other sin whereby the act is wrongfully performed outside the rightful channel. And the very great enormity of such a sin in this way is shown by the fact that all devils equally, of whatsoever order, abominate and think shame to commit such actions. And it seems that the gloss on *Ezekiel* xix means this, where it says: I will give thee into the hands of the dwellers in Palestine, that is devils, who shall blush at your iniquities, meaning vices against nature. And the student will see what should be authoritatively understood concerning devils. For no sin has God so often punished by the shameful death of multitudes.

Indeed many say, and it is truly believed, that no one can unimperilled persevere in the practice of such vices beyond the period of the mortal life of Christ, which lasted for thirty-three years, unless he should be saved by some special grace of the Redeemer. And this is proved by the fact that there have often been ensnared by this vice octogenarians and centenarians, who had up to that time ruled their lives according to the discipline of Christ; and, having forsaken Him, they have found the very greatest difficulty in obtaining deliverance, and in abandoning themselves to such vices.

Moreover, the names of the devils indicate what order there is among them, and what office is assigned to each. For though one and the same name, that of devil, is generally used in Scripture because of their various qualities, yet the Scriptures teach that One is set over these filthy actions, just as certain other vices are subject to Another. For it is the practice of Scripture and of speech to name every unclean spirit Diabolus, from Dia, that is Two, and Bolus, that is Morsel; for he kills two things, the body and the soul. And this is in accordance with etymology, although in Greek *Diabolus* means shut in Prison, which also is apt, since he is not permitted to do as much harm as he wishes. Or Diabolus may mean Downflowing, since he flowed down, that is, fell down, both specifically and locally. He is also named Demon, that is, Cunning over Blood, since he thirsts for and procures sin with a threefold knowledge, being powerful in the subtlety of his nature, in his age-long experience, and in the revelation of the good spirits. He is called also Belial, which means Without Yoke or Master; for he can fight against him to whom he should be subject. He is called also Beelzebub, which means Lord of Flies, that is, of the souls of sinners who have left the true faith of Christ. Also Satan, that is, the Adversary; see I *S. Peter* ii: For your adversary the devil goeth about, etc. Also Behemoth, that is, Beast, because he makes men bestial.

But the very devil of Fornication, and the chief of that abomination, is called Asmodeus, which means the Creature of Judgement: for because of this kind of sin a terrible judgement was executed upon Sodom and the four other cities. Similarly the devil of Pride is called Leviathan, which means Their Addition; because when Lucifer tempted our first parents he promised them, out of his pride, the addition of Divinity. Concerning him the Lord said through *Esaias*: I shall visit it upon Leviathan, that old and tortuous serpent. And the devil of Avarice and Riches is called Mammon, whom also Christ mentions in the Gospel (*S. Matthew* vi): Ye cannot serve God, etc.

To the arguments. *First*, that good can be found without evil, but evil cannot be found without good; for it is poured upon a creature that is good in itself. And therefore the devils, in so far as they have a good nature, were ordained in the course of nature; and for their actions see *Job* x.

*Secondly*, it can be said that the devils deputed to work are not in Hell, but in the lower mists. And they have here an order among themselves, which they will not have in Hell. From which it may be said that all order ceased among them, as touching the attainment of blessedness, at that time when they fell irrecoverably from such rank. And it may be said that even in Hell there will

be among them a gradation of power, and of the affliction of punishments, inasmuch as some, and not others, will be deputed to torment the souls. But this gradation will come rather from God than from themselves, as will also their torments.

*Thirdly*, when it is said that the higher devils, because they sinned the more, are the more punished, and must therefore be the more bound to the commission of these filthy acts, it is answered that sin bears relation to punishment, and not to the act or operation of nature; and therefore it is by reason of their nobility of nature that these are not given to such filthiness, and it has nothing to do with their sin or punishment. And though they are all impure spirits, and eager to do harm, yet one is more so than another, in proportion as their natures are the further thrust into darkness.

*Fourthly*, it is said that there is agreement among devils, but of wickedness rather than friendship, in that they hate mankind, and strive their utmost against justice. For such agreement is found among the wicked, that they band themselves together, and depute those whose talents seem suitable to the pursuit of particular iniquities.

*Fifthly*, although imprisonment is equally decreed for all, now in the lower atmosphere and afterwards in Hell, yet not therefore are equal penalties and duties equally ordained for them: for the nobler they are in nature and the more potent in office, the heavier is the torment to which they are subjected. See *Wisdom* vi: “The powerful shall powerfully suffer torments.”

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## [Question V](#)

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION V.*

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*What is the Source of the Increase of Works of Witchcraft? Whence comes it that the Practice of Witchcraft hath so notably increased?*

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Is it in any way a Catholic opinion to hold that the origin and growth of witchcraft proceed from the influence of the celestial bodies; or from the abundant wickedness of men, and not from the abominations of Incubi and Succubi? And it seems that it springs from man's own wickedness. For S. Augustine says, in Book LXXXIII, that the cause of a man's depravity lies in his own will, whether he sins at his own or at another's suggestion. But a witch is depraved through sin, therefore the cause of it is not the devil but human will. In the same place he speaks of free-will, that everyone is the cause of his own wickedness. And he reasons thus: that the sin of man proceeds from free-will, but the devil cannot destroy free-will, for this would militate against liberty: therefore the devil cannot be the cause of that or any other sin. Again, in the book of Ecclesiastic Dogma it is said: Not all our evil thoughts are stirred up by the devil, but sometimes they arise from the operation of our own judgement.

Again, if the stars were not the cause of human actions both good and bad, Astrologers would not so frequently foretell the truth about the result of wars and other human acts: therefore they are in some way a cause.

Again, the stars influence the devils themselves in the causing of certain spells; and therefore they can all the more influence men. Three proofs are adduced for this assumption. For certain men who are called Lunatics are molested by devils more at one time than at another; and the devils would not so behave, but would rather molest them at all times, unless they themselves were deeply affected by certain phases of the Moon. It is proved again from the fact the Necromancers observe certain constellations for the invoking of devils, which they would not do unless they knew that those devils were subject to the stars.

And this is also adduced as a proof; that according to S. Augustine (*de Ciuitate Dei*, 10), the devils employ certain lower bodies, such as herbs, stones, animals, and certain sounds and voices, and figures. But since the heavenly bodies are of more potency than the lower bodies, therefore the stars are a far greater influence than these things. And witches are the more in subjection in that their deeds proceed from the influence of those bodies, and not from the help of evil spirits. And the argument is supported from I *Kings* xvi, where Saul was vexed by a devil, but was calmed when David struck his harp before him, and the evil departed.

*But against this.* It is impossible to produce an effect without its cause; and the deeds of witches are such that they cannot be done without the help of devils, as is shown by the description of witches in S. Isidore, *Ethics* VIII. Witches are so called from the enormity of their magic spells; for they disturb the elements and confound the minds of men, and without any venomous draught, but merely by virtue of incantations, destroy souls, etc. But this sort of effects cannot be caused by

the influence of the stars through the agency of a man.

Besides, Aristotle says in his *Ethics* that it is difficult to know what is the beginning of the operation of thought, and shows that it must be something extrinsic. For everything that begins from a beginning has some cause. Now a man begins to do that which he wills; and he begins to will because of some pre-suggestion; and if this is some precedent suggestion, it must either proceed from the infinite, or there is some extrinsic beginning which first brings a suggestion to a man. Unless indeed it be argued that this is a matter of chance, from which it would follow that all human actions are fortuitous, which is absurd. Therefore the beginning of good in the good is said to be God, Who is not the cause of sin. But for the wicked, when a man begins to be influenced towards and wills to commit sin, there must also be some extrinsic cause of this. And this can be no other than the devil; especially in the case of witches, as is shown above, for the stars cannot influence such acts. Therefore the truth is plain.

Moreover, that which has power over the motive has also power over the result which is caused by the motive. Now the motive of the will is something perceived through the sense or the intellect, both of which are subject to the power of the devil. For S. Augustine says in Book 83: This evil, which is of the devil, creeps in by all the sensual approaches; he places himself in figures, he adapts himself to colours, he attaches himself to sounds, he lurks in angry and wrongful conversation, he abides in smells, he impregnates with flavours and fills with certain exhalations all the channels of the understanding. Therefore it is seen that it is in the devil's power to influence the will, which is directly the cause of sin.

Besides, everything which has a choice of two ways needs some determining factor before it proceeds to the action. And the free-will of man has the choice between good and ill; therefore when he embarks upon sin, it needs that he is determined by something towards ill. And this seems chiefly to be done by the devil, especially in the actions of witches, whose will is made up for evil. Therefore it seems that the evil will of the devil is the cause of evil will in man, especially in witches. And the argument may be substantiated thus; that just as a good Angel cleaves to good, so does a bad Angel to evil; but the former leads a man into goodness, therefore the latter leads him into evil. For it is, says Dionysius, the unalterable and fixed law of divinity, that the lowest has its cause in the highest.

*Answer.* Such as contend that witchcraft has its origin in the influence of the stars stand convicted of three errors. In the first place, it is not possible that it originated from astromancers and casters of horoscopes and fortune-tellers. For if it is asked whether the vice of witchcraft in men is caused by the influence of the stars, then, in consideration of the variety of men's characters, and for the upholding of the true faith, a distinction must be maintained; namely, that there are two ways in which it can be understood that men's characters can be caused by the stars. Either completely and of necessity, or by disposition and contingency. And as for the first, it is not only false, but so heretical and contrary to the Christian religion, that the true faith cannot be maintained in such an error. For this reason, he who argues that everything of necessity proceeds from the stars takes away all merit and, in consequence, all blame: also he takes away Grace, and therefore Glory. For uprightness of character suffers prejudice by this error, since the blame of the sinner redounds upon the stars, licence to sin without culpability is conceded, and man is committed to the worship and adoration of the stars.

But as for the contention that men's characters are conditionally varied by the disposition of the stars, it is so far true that it is not contrary to reason or faith. For it is obvious that the disposition of a body variously causes many variations in the humours and character of the soul; for generally the soul imitates the complexions of the body, as it said in the Six Principles.

Wherefore the choleric are wrathful, the sanguine are kindly, the melancholy are envious, and the phlegmatic are slothful. But this is not absolute; for the soul is master of its body, especially when it is helped by Grace. And we see many choleric who are gently, and melancholy who are kindly. Therefore when the virtue of the stars influences the formation and quality of a man's humours, it is agreed that they have some influence over the character, but very distantly: for the virtue of the lower nature has more effect on the quality of the humours than has the virtue of the stars.

Wherefore S. Augustine (*de Ciuitate Dei*, V), where he resolves a certain question of two brothers who fell ill and were cured simultaneously, approves the reasoning of Hippocrates rather than that of an Astronomer. For Hippocrates answered that it is owing to the similarity of their humours; and the Astronomer answered that it was owing the identity of their horoscopes. For the Physician's answer was better, since he adduced the more powerful and immediate cause. Thus, therefore, it must be said that the influence of the stars is to some degree conducive to the wickedness of witches, if it be granted that there is any such influence over the bodies that predisposes them to this manner of abomination rather than to any other sort of works either vicious or virtuous: but this disposition must not be said to be necessary, immediate, and sufficient, but remote and contingent.

Neither is that objection valid which is based on the book of the Philosophers on the properties of the elements, where it says that kingdoms are emptied and lands depopulated at the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn; and it is argued from this that such things are to be understood as being outside the free-will of men, and that therefore the influence of the stars has power over free-will. For it is answered that in this saying the Philosopher does not mean to imply that men cannot resist the influence of that constellation towards dissensions, but that they will not. For Ptolemy in *Almagest* says: [A wise man will be the master of the stars](#). For although, since Saturn has a melancholy and bad influence and Jupiter a very good influence, the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn can dispose men to quarrels and discords; yet, through free-will, men can resist that inclination, and very easily with the help of God's grace.

And again it is no valid objection to quote [S. John Damascene](#) where he says (Book II, chap. vi) that comets are often the sign of the death of kings. For it will be answered that even if we follow the opinion of S. John Damascene, which was, as is evident in the book referred to, contrary to the opinion of the Philosophic Way, yet this is no proof of the inevitability of human actions. For S. John considers that a comet is not a natural creation, nor is it one of the stars set in the firmament; wherefore neither its significance nor influence is natural. For he says that comets are not of the stars which were created in the beginning, but that they are made for a particular occasion, and then dissolved, by Divine command. This then is the opinion of S. John Damascene. But God by such a sign foretells the death of kings rather than of other men, both because from this may arise the confusion of a kingdom. And the Angels are more careful to watch over kings for the general good; and kings are born and die under the ministry of Angels.

And there is no difficulty in the opinion of the Philosophers, who say that a comet is a hot and dry conglomeration, generated in the higher part of space near the fire, and that a conjoined globe of that hot and dry vapour assumes the likeness of a star. But unincorporated parts of that vapour stretch in long extremities joined to that globe, and are a sort of adjunct to it. And according to this view, not of itself but by accident, it predicts death which proceeds from hot and dry infirmities. And since for the most part the rich are fed on things of a hot and dry nature, therefore at such times many of the rich die; among which the death of kings and princes is the most notable. And this view is not far from the view of S. John Damascene, when carefully considered, except as

regards the operation and co-operation of the Angels, which not even the philosophers can ignore. For indeed when the vapours in their dryness and heat have nothing to do with the generation of a comet, even then, for reasons already set out, a comet may be formed by the operation of an Angel.

In this way the star which portended the death of the learned S. Thomas was not one of the stars set in the firmament, but was formed by an Angel from some convenient material, and, having performed its office, was again dissolved.

From this we see that, whichever of those opinions we follow, the stars have no inherent influence over the free-will, or, consequently, over the malice and character of men.

It is to be noted also that Astronomers often foretell the truth, and that their judgements are for the most part effective on one province or one nation. And the reason is that they take their judgements from the stars, which, according to the more probable view, have a greater, though not an inevitable, influence over the actions of mankind in general, that is, over one nation or province, than over one individual person; and this because the greater part of one nation more closely obeys the natural disposition of the body than does one single man. But this is mentioned incidentally.

And the second of the three ways by which we vindicate the Catholic standpoint is by refuting the errors of those who cast Horoscopes and [Mathematicians](#) who worship the goddess of fortune. Of these S. Isidore (*Ethics*, VIII. 9) says that those who cast Horoscopes are so called from their examination of the stars at nativity, and are commonly called Mathematicians; and in the same Book, chapter 2, he says that Fortune has her name from fortuitousness. and is a sort of goddess who mocks human affairs in a haphazard and fortuitous manner. Wherefore she is called blind, since she runs here and there with no consideration for desert, and comes indifferently to good and bad. So much for Isidore. But to believe that there is such a goddess, or that the harm done to bodies and creatures which is ascribed to witchcraft does not actually proceed from witchcraft, but from that same goddess of Fortune, is sheer idolatry: and also to assert that witches themselves were born for that very purpose that they might perform such deeds in the world is similarly alien to the Faith, and indeed to the general teaching of the Philosophers. Anyone who pleases may refer to S. Thomas in the 3rd book of his *Summa* of the Faith against the Gentiles. question 87, etc., and he will find much to this effect.

Nevertheless one point must not be omitted, for the sake of those who perhaps have not great quantity of books. It is there noted that three things are to be considered in man, which are directed by three celestial causes, namely, the act of the will, the act of the intellect, and the act of the body. The first of these is governed directly and solely by God, the second by an Angel, and the third by a celestial body. For choice and will are directly governed by God for good works, as the Scripture says in *Proverbs* xxi: The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; he turneth it whithersoever he will. And it says "the heart of the king" to signify that, as the great cannot oppose His will, so are others even less able to do so. Also S. Paul says: God who causeth us to wish and to perform that which is good.

## Question V Continued . . . .

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*“Almagest.” Claudius Ptolemaeus was a celebrated mathematician, astronomer, and geographer. Of the details of his life nothing appears to be known beyond the facts that he was certainly at Alexandria in A.D. 139, and since he survived Antoninus Pius he was alive later than March, 161. His “Geography,” Γεωγραφικὴ ὑφήγησις is very famous, but perhaps even more celebrated was the Μεγάλη σύνταξις τῆς ἀστρονομίας, usually known by its Arabic name of Almagest. Since the “Tetrabiblus,” the work on astrology, was also entitled σύνταξις, the Arabs, to distinguish between the two, called the greater work μεγάλη, and afterwards μεγίστη; the title “Almagest” is a compound of this last adjective and the Arabic article. The work is divided into thirteen books, of which VII and VIII are the most interesting to the modern astronomer, as they give a catalogue of the stars. The best edition of the “Almagest” is considered to be that by Halma, Paris, 1813-16, two vols., 4to.*

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*“Sapiens homo dominabitur astris.” This famous tag is continually quoted. Cf. Tomkis' “Albumazar” (acted at Cambridge, March, 1615), I, 7, where Albumazar says:*

*Indeed th' Ægyptian Ptolemy, the wise,  
Pronounc'd it as an oracle of truth,  
Sapiens dominabitur astris.*

*In Book III, Epigram 186, of John Owen's first published volume, we get:*

*“Fata regunt reges; sapiens dominabitur astris.”*

*Sir Sampson Legend in Congreve's “Love for Love,” was produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields, 30 April, 1695, II, 1, bantering old Foresight, who loudly acclaims the influence of the stars, throws at him: “I tell you I am wise; and sapiens dominabitur astris; there's Latin for you to prove it.” According to W. Aldis Wright's note on Bacon's “Advancement of Learning,” II, xxiii, 12: “Mr. Ellis says this sentence is ascribed to Ptolemy by Cognatus.” The reference is to Cognatus's collection of Adages, which together with the “Adagia” of Erasmus and other famous repertories of saws and proverbs may be found in the volume “Adagia” compiled by Joynaeus. Joannes Nevizanus, “Sylva Nuptialis,” II, 96, notes: “Dicit tamen Bal. in c.j. at lite pand. quod sapiens dominabitur astris.” Bal. is Baldus, Baldo degli Ubaldi (b. 1327), the most famous canonist of his day and Professor utriusque iuris at the Universities of Padua, Perugia, and Piacenza, who wrote ample glosses on the “Corpus Iuris Civilis.” Burton, “Anatomy of Melancholy,” quotes “spapiens,” etc., and A.R. Shilleto in his notes says that it is also cited by Jeremy Taylor, and that C.G. Eden, his best editor, could not trace the origin of the phrase.*

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*“S. John.” S. John Damascene, Doctor of the Church, was born at Damascus about 676, and died some time between 754 and 787. The quotation is from  $\text{\text{Εκθoις ἀκριβῆς ὀρθoδoξoυ πῖστως}}$ , which is the third part of the most important of all his works,  $\text{\text{Πηγῆ γνῶσεωσ}}$ , Fountain of Wisdom. This third part, “The Orthodox Faith,” to which reference is made here, must be considered the most notable of all writings of S. John Damascene, and it is in this treatise that he discloses so comprehensive a knowledge of the astronomy of his day. It may be pointed out that Sprenger regards the authority of S. John far too lightly, for the Doctor's words carry great weight. The only complete edition of the works of S. John Damascene is that by Michael Lequien, O.P., published at Paris, 1717, and Venice, 1748. Migne has reprinted this, “Patres Græci,” XCIV-XCVI, with the addition of certain works by some attributed to the same author.*

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*“Mathematicians.” Although in Cicero and in Seneca “mathematicus” means a mathematician, in later Latin it always signifies an astrologer, a diviner, a wizard. The “Mathematici” were condemned by the Roman law as exponents of black magic. Their art is indeed forbidden in severest terms by Diocletian (A.D. 284-305): “Artem geometriae discere atque exervere ouble interest, ars autem mathematica damnabilis interdicta est omnino.” The world “mathematician” was used in English sometimes to denote an astrologer, a fortune-teller. So in Shirley's comedy “The Sisters,” III, licensed April 1642, when the bandist disguised as diviners visit the castle, Giovanni enters crying out: “Master Steward, yonder are the rarest fellows! In such fantastical habits, too; they call themselves mathematicians.” “What do they come for?” the steward asks. “To offer their service to my Lady, and tell fortunes,” is the reply. When Antonio sees them he grumbles:*

*Her house is open for these mountebanks,  
Cheaters, and tumblers, that can foist and flatter  
My Lady Gewgaw. . .*

*What are you, sir?*

*Strozzo. One of the mathematicians, noble signior.*

*Antonio. Mathematicians! mongrel,  
How durst thou take that learned name upon thee?  
Your are one of those knaves that stroll the country,  
And live by picking worms out of fools' fingers.*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I.* *QUESTION V. CONTINUED . . .*

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The human understanding is governed by God through the mediation of an Angel. And those bodily actions, either exterior or interior, which are natural to man, are regulated by God through the mediation of the Angels and the celestial bodies. For blessed Dionysius (*de Diuin. nom.*, IV) says that the celestial bodies are the causes of that which happens in this world; though he makes no implication of fatality.

And since man is governed as to his body by the celestial bodies, as to his intellect by the Angels, and as to his will by God, it may happen that if he rejects God's inspiration towards goodness, and the guidance of his bodily affections to those things toward which the influence of the stars inclines him, that so his will and understanding become entangled in malice and error.

However, it is not possible for anyone to be influenced by the stars to enter upon that sort of error in which the witches are ensnared, such as bloodshed, theft or robbery, or even the perpetration of the worst incontinences; and this is true of other natural phenomena.

Also, as William of Paris says in his *De Universo*, it is proved by experience that if a harlot tries to plant an olive it does not become fruitful, whereas if it is planted by a chaste woman it is fruitful. And a doctor in healing, a farmer in planting, or a soldier in fighting can do more with the help of the influence of the stars than another who possesses the same skill can do.

Our third way is taken from the refutation of the belief in Fate. And here it is to be noted that a belief in Fate is in one way quite Catholic, but in another way entirely heretical. For Fate may be understood after the manner of certain Gentiles and Mathematicians, who thought that the different characters of men were inevitably caused by the force of the position of the stars, so that a wizard was predestined to be such, even if he were of a good character, because the disposition of the stars under which he was conceived or born caused him to be such as he was. And that force they called by the name of Fate.

But that opinion is not only false, but heretical and altogether detestable on account of the deprivation which it must entail, as was shown above in the refutation of the first error. For by it would be removed all reason for merit or blame, for grace and glory, and God would be made the author of our evil, and more such incongruities. Therefore such conception of Fate must be altogether rejected, since there is no such thing. And touching this belief S. Gregory says in his Homily on the Epiphany: Far be it from the hearts of the faithful to say that there is any Fate.

And although, on account of the same incongruity which is detected in both, this opinion may seem to be the same as that concerning the Astrologers, they are yet different inasmuch as they disagree concerning the force of the stars and the influx of the seven Planets.

But Fate may be considered to be a sort of second disposition, or an ordination of second causes for the production of foreseen Divine effects. And in this way Fate is truly something. For the providence of God accomplishes His effects through mediating cause, in such matters are subject to second causes; though this is not so in the case of some other matters, such as the

creation of souls, glorification, and the acquisition of grace.

Also the Angels may co-operate in the infusion of Grace by enlightening and guiding the understanding and the capability of the will, and so a certain arrangement of results may be said to be one and the same of Providence or even Fate. For it is considered in this way; that there is in God a quality which may be called Providence, or it may be said that He has ordained intermediary causes for the realization of some of His purposes; and to this extent Fate is a rational fact. And in this way Boethius speaks of Fate (*de Consolatione* IV): Fate is an inherent disposition in things mobile, by which Providence binds things to that which It has ordained.

Nevertheless the learned Saints refused to use this name, on account of those who twisted its meaning to force of the position of the stars. Wherefore S. Augustine (*de Ciuitate Dei*, V) says: If anyone attributed human affairs to Fate, meaning by Fate the Will and Power of God, let him keep his opinion but amend his tongue.

It is clear, then, that what has been said provides a sufficient answer to the question whether all things, including works of witchcraft, are subject to Fate. For if Fate is said to be the ordainment of second cause of foreseen Divine results, that is, when God wills to effect His purposes through second causes; to that extent they are subject to Fate, that is, to second causes so ordained by God; and the influence of the stars is one of these second causes. But those things which come directly from God, such as the Creation of things, the Glorification of things substantial and spiritual, and other things of this sort, are not subject to such Fate. And Boethius, in the book we have quoted, supports this view when he says that those things which are near to the primal Deity are beyond the influence of the decrees of Fate. Therefore the works of witches, being outside the common cause and order of nature, are not subject to these second causes. That is to say, that as regards their origin they are not subject to willy-nilly Fate, but to other causes.

*Witchcraft is not caused by the Powers that Move the Stars*

It follows that, just as witchcraft cannot be caused in the manner that has been suggested, so also it is not caused by the separate Essences which are the Powers that move the stars; although this was believed to be the case by Avicenna and his school, for the following reasons. For they argued those are separate Essences of a higher power than our souls; and the soul itself can sometimes, by the force of imagination, or merely through fear, effect a change in its own body. For example, a man walking on a plank place at a great height easily falls, but in his fear he imagines that he will fall; but if the plank were placed on the ground he would not fall, for he would have no reason to fear falling. So by the mere apprehension of the soul the body grows hot in the case of the concupiscent and wrathful, and cold in the case of the fearful. It can also, by strongly imagining and fearing such things, be affected with illnesses, such as fever and leprosy. And as with its own body, so it can influence another body either for health or sickness; and to this is ascribed the cause of bewitchment, of which we have spoken above.

And since according to that view the deeds of witches have to be attributed to the Powers that move the stars, if not precisely to the stars themselves; therefore we must add to what we have already said on this subject, that this also is impossible. For the Powers that move the stars are good and intelligent Essences, not only by nature but also by will, as appears from their working for the good of the whole universe. But that creature by whose aid witchcraft is done, although it may be good in nature, cannot be good by will. Therefore it is impossible to hold the same judgement of both these Essences.

And that such an Essence cannot be good in respect of will is proved as follows. For it is no

part of a well-disposed intelligence to extend patronage to those who act against virtue; and of such sort are the actions of witches. For it will be shown in the Second Part that they commit murders, fornications, and sacrifices of children and animals, and for their evil deeds are called witches. Therefore the Intelligence by whose aid such witchcraft is performed cannot be well-disposed towards virtue; although it may be good in its original nature, since all things are so, as is evident to anyone who thinks about it. Also it is no part of a good Intelligence to be the familiar spirit of criminals, and to extend patronage to them and not to the virtuous. For they are criminals who use witchcraft, and they are known by their works.

Now the natural function of the Essences that move the stars is to influence any creature for good, although it often happens that it becomes corrupted by some accident. Therefore those Essences cannot be the original cause of witches.

Besides, it is the part of a good spirit to lead men to that which is good in human nature, and of good repute; therefore to entice men away from such, and to betray them into evil things, belongs to an evilly-disposed spirit. And by the wiles of such a spirit men make no headway in those things which are worthy, such as the sciences and virtues, but rather in that which is evil, such as the knowledge of theft and a thousand other crimes; therefore the origin is not in these separate Essences, but in some Power evilly disposed toward virtue.

Besides, that cannot be understood to be a well-disposed spirit in the commission of crimes. But this is what happens in the deeds of witches; for, as will be shown by their performances, they abjure the Faith, and slay innocent children. For the separate Essences which move the stars do not, on account of their goodness, provide help in these works if witchcraft.

In conclusion, then; this kind of works can no more arise from the Movers of the stars than from the stars themselves. And since they must originate from some Power allied to some creature, and that Power cannot be good in its will, although it may be naturally good, and that the devils themselves answer to this description, it follows that it is by their power that such things are done.

Unless, indeed, anyone should bring forward the trifling objection that witchcraft originates in human malice, and that it is effected by curses, and the placings of images in a certain place, the stars being favourable. For example, a certain witch placed her image and said to a woman, "I will make you blind and lame"; and it happened so. But it happened because the woman from her nativity was destined by the stars for such an affliction; and if such words and practices had been used against anyone else, they would not have been effective. And to this I shall answer in detail; first, that such witchcrafts cannot be caused by human malice; secondly, that they cannot be caused by magic words or images, whatever stars may be in concurrence.

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*Witchcraft does not operate from Human Malice alone.*

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And first to prove that witches' works cannot arise from human malice, however great. For a man's malice may be either habitual, inasmuch as by frequent practice he acquires a habit that inclines him to commit sin, not from ignorance but from weakness; in which case he is held to sin from wickedness. Or it may be actual malice, by which is meant the deliberate choice of evil, which is called the sin against the Holy Ghost. But in neither case can he, without the help of some higher Power, work such spells as the mutation of the elements, or the harming of the bodies both of men and beasts. And this is proved first as to the cause, and secondly as to the effect of witchcraft.

For a man cannot effect such works without malice, that is, a weakening of his nature, and still less when his nature has already been weakened; as is clear, since his active virtue is already

diminished. But man, through all sorts of sin and wickedness, becomes weakened in his natural goodness. Both reason and authority prove this. For Dionysius (*de Diuin. Nom.* IV) says: Sin is the effect of natural habit; and he speaks of the sin of guilt. Wherefore no one who is conscious of sin commits it, unless he does so out of deliberate revolt.

*I answer* thus. The sin of guilt stands in the same relation to the good of nature as does the good of grace to the sin of nature. But by grace is diminished natural sin, which is as a tinder prone to guilt; therefore much more is natural good diminished by guilt. And it is not valid to put forward the objection that a bewitchment is sometimes caused by an old woman evilly looking at a child, by which the child is changed and bewitched. For, as has already been shown, this can only happen to children because of their tender complexion. But here we speak of the bodies of all sorts of men and beasts, and even the elements and hailstorms. If anyone wishes to inquire further, he may refer to S. Thomas in his questions concerning Evil: Whether sin can corrupt the whole natural good, etc.

And now as regards the effects of witchcraft. From the effects we arrive at a knowledge of the cause. Now these effects, as they concerns us, are outside the order of created nature as known to us, and are done through the power of some creature unknown to us, although they are not miracles, which are things done outside the order of the whole of created nature. As for miracles, they are wrought by His power Who is above the whole order of the entire natural creation, Which is the Blessed God; as it is said: Thou are He Who alone workest great marvels. So also the works of witches are said to be miraculous only inasmuch as they are done by some cause unknown to us, and outside the order of created nature as known to us. From which it follows that the corporeal virtue of a man cannot extend itself to the causation of such works; for it has always this quality, that the cause with the natural effect is, in the case of man, recognized naturally and without wonder.

And that the works of witches can in some way be called miraculous, in so far as they exceed human knowledge, is clear from their very nature; for they are not done naturally. It is shown also by all the Doctors, especially S. Augustine in Book LXXXIII, where he says that by magic arts many miracles are wrought similar to those miracles which are done by the servants of God. And again in the same book he says that Magicians do miracles by private contract, good Christians by public justice, and bad Christians by the signs of public justice. And all this is explained as follows. For there is a Divine justice in the whole universe, just as there is a public law in the State. But the virtue of any creature has to do with the universe, as that of the private individual has to do with the State. Therefore inasmuch as good Christians work miracles by Divine justice, they are said to work them by public justice. But the Magician, since he works through a pact entered into with the devil, is said to work by private contract; for he works by means of the devil, who by his natural power can do things outside the order of created nature as known to us, through the virtue of a creature unknown to us, and it will be for us a miracle, although not actually so, since he cannot work outside of the whole of created nature, and through all the virtues of creatures unknown to us. For in this way only God is said to work miracles. As it said: Thou are God Who alone workest great marvels. But bad Christians work through the signs of public justice, as by invoking the Name of Christ, or by exhibiting certain sacraments. If anyone pleases, he can refer to S. Thomas in the first part of the questions, III, art. 4. He can also study the conclusions in the Second Part of this work, Chapter VI.



## [Question V Continued . . .](#)

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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*PART I.  
QUESTION V. CONTINUED . . . .*

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*That Witchcraft is not exercised and wrought by Voices and Words under a favouring Influence of the Stars.*

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Neither does witchcraft proceed from words uttered over images by men under favourable constellations. For the intellect of a man is of such a nature that its knowledge springs from things, and phantasms must be rationally examined. It is not in his nature, simply by thought or by the intrinsic operation of his intellect, to cause things to happen just by expressing them in words. For if there were men who had such power, they would not be of the same nature as we, and could only equivocally be called men.

But it is said that they effect these things by words when the stars of the nativity are favourable; from which it would follow that they would be able to act by the power of words only under certain conditions, and that they would be powerless without the help of the stars of their victim's nativity. But this is clearly false from what has been said before concerning Astromancers, casters of Horoscopes and Fortune-tellers.

Besides, words express the conception of the mind; and the stars cannot influence the understanding, neither can the Powers that move them, unless they wish on their own account, and apart from the motion of the stars, to enlighten the understanding; and this would only happen in regard to good works, for not enlightenment but darkness is given to the understanding for the performance of evil works; and such is the function not of good, but of evil spirits. Therefore it is clear that if their words are in any way effective, it is not by virtue of any star, but by virtue of some Intelligence, which may be naturally good, but cannot be good in respect of will, since it always works for evil; and such is the devil, as has been shown above.

Again, it has been shown above that there are two kinds of images. Those of the Astrologers and Mages are ordained not for corruption, but for the obtaining of some private good. But the images of witches are quite different, since always they are secretly placed somewhere by the command of the devil for the hurt of the creature; and they who walk or sleep over them are harmed, as the witches themselves confess. Wherefore whatever they effect is done by means of devils, and is not due to the influence of the stars.

*To the arguments.* For the first, we must understand the words of S. Augustine, that the cause of man's depravity lies in man's will, meaning the cause which produces the effect; which is properly said to be the cause. It is not so, however, with the cause which permits the effect, or arranges or advises or suggests it, in which sense the devil is said to be the cause of sin and depravity; God only permitting it that good may come of evil. As S. Augustine says: The devil provides the inner suggestion, and persuades both inwardly and outwardly by more active stimulation. But he instructs those who are entirely in his power, as are witches, whom there is no need to tempt from within, but only from without, etc.

And through this we come to the second argument, that everyone is, by direct understanding, the cause of his own wickedness. And concerning this it is to be said that, though it would be contrary to the doctrine of free-will to believe that a man may be influenced by direct command, it is not to say that he is influenced by suggestion.

Thirdly, impulses to good or evil can be caused to be suggested by the influence of the stars, and the impulse is received as a natural inclination to human virtue or vice. But the works of witches are outside the common order of nature, and therefore they cannot be subject to those influences.

The fourth argument is equally clear. For though the stars are a cause of human acts, witchcraft is not properly a human act.

For the fifth argument, that the Powers that move the stars can influence souls. If that is understood directly, they do so influence them by enlightening them towards goodness, but not to witchcraft, as has been shown above. But if it is understood mediately, then through the medium of the stars they exert an indirect and suggestive influence.

Sixthly, there are two reasons why devils molest men at certain phases of the Moon. First, that they may bring disrepute on a creature of God, namely, the Moon, as S. Jerome and S. John Chrysostom say. Secondly, because they cannot, as has been said above, operate except through the medium of the natural powers. Therefore they study the aptitudes of bodies for receiving an impression; and because, as Aristotle says, the brain is the most humid of all the parts of the body, therefore it chiefly is subject to the operation of the Moon, which itself has power to incite humours. Moreover, the animal forces are perfected in the brain, and therefore the devils disturb a man's fancy according to certain phases of the Moon, when the brain is ripe for such influences.

And there are two reasons why the devils are present as counsellors in certain constellations. First, that they may lead men into the error of thinking that there is some divinity in the stars. Secondly, because they think that under the influence of some constellations corporeal matter is more apt for the deeds that they counsel.

And as to what S. Augustine says in *de Ciuitate Dei*, XXXVI: Devils are attracted by various kinds of stones, herbs, trees, animals, songs, and instruments of music, not as animals are attracted by food, but as spirits by signs, as if these things were exhibited to them as a sign of Divine honour, for which they are themselves eager.

But it is often objected that devils can be hindered by herbs and music from molesting men; as it is alleged in the argument from Saul and the music of the harp. And hence an attempt is made to argue that some men can work witchcraft through certain herbs and occult causes, without the help of devils, buy only of the influence of the stars, which have more direct power over matter corporeal for corporeal effects than over the devils for effects of witchcraft.

Now, though this must be answered more widely, it is to be noted that herbs and music cannot by their own natural virtue entirely shut out the molestation which the devil can inflict upon men, with the permission of God and the Angels. Yet they can mitigate that molestation; and this can even be of so slight a nature that they can entirely remove it. But they would do this, not by acting against the devil himself, since he is a separate spirit against whom nothing corporeal can naturally act, but by acting against the actual molestation of the devil. For every cause that has limited power can produce a more intense effect on a suitable than upon an unsuitable material. See Aristotle *De Anima*. They who act do so upon a predisposed patient. Now the devil is an agent of limited power; therefore he can inflict a fiercer affliction on a man disposed to that affliction or to that which the devil means to inflict, than upon a man of a contrary disposition. For example, the devil can induce a fiercer passion of melancholy in a man disposed to that humour than in a man of

the contrary disposition.

Moreover, it is certain that herbs and music can change the disposition of the body, and consequently if the emotions. This is evident in the case of herbs, since some incline a man to joy, some to sadness, and so with others. It is evident also in the case of music, as Aristotle shows (*Politics*, VIII), where he says that different harmonies can produce different passions in a man. Boethius also mentions this in his *Music*, and the author of the *Birth of Knowledge*, where he speaks of the usefulness of music, and says that it is of value in the cure or alleviation of various infirmities. And thus, other things being equal, it may help to weaken the affliction.

But I do not see how herbs or music can cause a man to be of such a disposition that he can in no way be molested by the devil. Even if such a thing were permissible, the devil, moving only in local vapour of the spirit, can grievously affect men supernaturally. But herbs and harmonies cannot of their own natural virtue cause in man a disposition by which the devil is prevented from creating the aforesaid commotion. Nevertheless it sometimes happens that the devil is permitted to inflict only so small a vexation on a man that, through some strong contrary disposition, it may be totally removed; and then some herbs or harmonies can so dispose a man's body to the contrary that the vexation is totally removed. For example, the devil may at times vex a man with the affliction of sadness; but so weakly that herbs or harmonies which are capable of causing a swelling and uplifting of the spirits, which are contrary emotions to sadness, can totally remove that sadness.

Moreover, S. Augustine, in his Second Book *On the Christian Doctrine*, condemns amulets and certain other things of which he there writes much, attributing their virtue to magic art, since they can have no natural virtue of their own. And this is clear from what he says. To this sort belong all amulets and charms which are condemned by the School of Physicians, which condemns very clearly their use, in that they have no efficacy of their own natural virtue.

And as for that concerning I *Kings* xvi: that Saul, who was vexed by a devil, was alleviated when David played his harp before him, and that the devil departed, etc. It must be known that it is quite true that by the playing of the harp, and the natural virtue of that harmony, the affliction of Saul was to some extent relieved, inasmuch as that music did somewhat calm his sense through hearing; through which calming he was made less prone to that vexation. But the reason why the evil spirit departed when David played the harp was because of the might of the Cross, which is clearly enough shown by the gloss, where it says: David was learned in music, skilful in the different notes and harmonic modulations. He shows the essential unity by playing each day in various modes. David repressed the evil spirit by the harp, not because there was so much virtue in the harp, but it was made in the sign of a cross, being a cross of wood with the strings stretched across it. And even at that time the devils fled from this.

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## [Question VI](#)

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION VI.*

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*Concerning Witches who copulate with Devils. Why is it that Women are chiefly addicted to Evil superstitions?*

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*Why it is that Women are chiefly addicted to Evil Superstitions.*

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There is also, concerning witches who copulate with devils, much difficulty in considering the methods by which such abominations are consummated. On the part of the devil: first, of what element the body is made that he assumes; secondly, whether the act is always accompanied by the injection of semen received from another; thirdly, as to time and place, whether he commits this act more frequently at one time than at another; fourthly, whether the act is invisible to any who may be standing by. And on the part of the women, it has to be inquired whether only they who were themselves conceived in this filthy manner are often visited by devils; or secondly, whether it is those who were offered to devils by midwives at the time of their birth; and thirdly, whether the actual venereal delectation of such is of a weaker sort. But we cannot here reply to all these questions, both because we are only engaged in a general study, and because in the second part of this work they are all singly explained by their operations, as will appear in the fourth chapter, where mention is made of each separate method. Therefore, let us now chiefly consider women; and first, why this kind of perfidy is found more in so fragile a sex than in men. And our inquiry will first be general, as to the general conditions of women; secondly, particular, as to which sort of women are found to be given to superstition and witchcraft; and thirdly, specifically with regard to midwives, who surpass all others in wickedness.

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*Why Superstition is chiefly found in Women.*

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As for the first question, why a greater number of witches is found in the fragile feminine sex than among men; it is indeed a fact that it were idle to contradict, since it is accredited by actual experience, apart from the verbal testimony of credibly witnesses. And without in any way detracting from a sex in which God has always taken great glory that His might should be spread abroad, let us say that various men have assigned various reasons for this fact, which nevertheless agree in principle. Wherefore it is good, for the admonition of women, to speak of this matter; and it has often been proved by experience that they are eager to hear of it, so long as it is set forth with discretion.

For some learned men propound this reason; that there are three things in nature, the Tongue, an Ecclesiastic, and a Woman, which know no moderation in goodness or vice; and when they exceed the bounds of their condition they reach the greatest heights and the lowest depths of goodness and vice. When they are governed by a good spirit, they are most excellent in virtue; but

when they are governed by an evil spirit, they indulge the worst possible vices.

This is clear in the case of the tongue, since by its ministry most of the kingdoms have been brought into the faith of Christ; and the Holy Ghost appeared over the Apostles of Christ in tongues of fire. Other learned preachers also have had as it were the tongues of dogs, licking wounds and sores of the dying Lazarus. As it is said: With the tongues of dogs ye save your souls from the enemy.

For this reason [S. Dominic](#), the leader and father of the Order of Preachers, is represented in the figure of a barking dog with a lighted torch in his mouth, that even to this day he may by his barking keep off the heretic wolves from the flock of Christ's sheep.

It is also a matter of common experience that the tongue of one prudent man can subdue the wrangling of a multitude; wherefore not unjustly Solomon sings much in their praise, in *Proverbs* x.: In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found. And again, The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth. And again, The lips of the righteous feed many; but fools die for want of wisdom. For this cause he adds in chapter xvi, The preparations of the heart belong to man; but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.

But concerning an evil tongue you will find in *Ecclesiasticus* xxviii: A backbiting tongue hath disquieted many, and driven them from nation to nation: strong cities hath it pulled down, and overthrown the houses of great men. And by a backbiting tongue it means a third party who rashly or spitefully interferes between two contending parties.

Secondly, concerning Ecclesiastics, that is to say, clerics and religious of either sex, [S. John Chrysostom](#) speaks on the text, He cast out them that bought and sold from the temple. From the priesthood arises everything good, and everything evil. S. Jerome in his epistle to Nepotian says: Avoid as you would the plague a trading priest, who has risen from poverty to riches, from a low to a high estate. And Blessed Bernard in his 23rd Homily *On the Psalms* says of clerics: If one should arise as an open heretic, let him be cast out and put to silence; if he is a violent enemy, let all good men flee from him. But how are we to know which ones to cast out or to flee from? For they are confusedly friendly and hostile, peaceable and quarrelsome, neighbourly and utterly selfish.

And in another place: Our bishops are become spearmen, and our pastors shearers. And by bishops here is meant those proud Abbots who impose heavy labours on their inferiors, which they would not themselves touch with their little finger. And S. Gregory says concerning pastors: No one does more harm in the Church than he who, having the name or order of sanctity, lives in sin; for no one dares to accuse him of sin, and therefore the sin is widely spread, since the sinner is honoured for the sanctity of his order. Blessed Augustine also speaks of monks to Vincent the Donatist: I freely confess to your charity before the Lord our God, which is the witness of my soul from the time I began to serve God, what great difficulty I have experienced in the fact that it is impossible to find either worse or better men than those who grace or disgrace the monasteries.

Now the wickedness of women is spoken of in *Ecclesiasticus* xxv: There is no head above the head of a serpent: and there is no wrath above the wrath of a woman. I had rather dwell with a lion and a dragon than to keep house with a wicked woman. And among much which in that place precedes and follows about a wicked woman, he concludes: All wickedness is but little to the wickedness of a woman. Wherefore S. John Chrysostom says on the text, It is not good to marry ([S. Matthew xix](#)): What else is woman but a foe to friendship, an unescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic danger, a delectable detriment, an evil of nature, painted with fair colours! Therefore if it be a sin to divorce her when

she ought to be kept, it is indeed a necessary torture; for either we commit adultery by divorcing her, or we must endure daily strife. Cicero in his second book of *The Rhetorics* says: The many lusts of men lead them into one sin, but the lust of women leads them into all sins; for the root of all woman's vices is avarice. And Seneca says in his *Tragedies*: A woman either loves or hates; there is no third grade. And the tears of woman are a deception, for they may spring from true grief, or they may be a snare. When a woman thinks alone, she thinks evil.

But for good women there is so much praise, that we read that they have brought beatitude to men, and have saved nations, lands, and cities; as is clear in the case of Judith, Debbora, and Esther. See also I *Corinthians* vii: If a woman hath a husband that believeth not, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife. And *Ecclesiasticus* xxvi: Blessed is the man who has a virtuous wife, for the number of his days shall be doubled. And throughout that chapter much high praise is spoken of the excellence of good women; as also in the last chapter of *Proverbs* concerning a virtuous woman.

And all this is made clear also in the New Testament concerning women and virgins and other holy women who have by faith led nations and kingdoms away from the worship of idols to the Christian religion. Anyone who looks at Vincent of Beauvais (*in Spe. Histo.*, XXVI. 9) will find marvellous things of the conversion of Hungary by the most Christian [Gilia](#), and of the Franks by [Clotilda](#), the wife of Clovis. Wherefore in many vituperations that we read against women, the word woman is used to mean the lust of the flesh. As it is said: I have found a woman more bitter than death, and good woman subject to carnal lust.

Other again have propounded other reasons why there are more superstitious women found than men. And the first is, that they are more credulous; and since the chief aim of the devil is to corrupt faith, therefore he rather attacks them. See *Ecclesiasticus* xix: He that is quick to believe is light-minded, and shall be diminished. The second reason is, that women are naturally more impressionable, and more ready to receive the influence of a disembodied spirit; and that when they use this quality well they are very good, but when they use it ill they are very evil.

The third reason is that they have slippery tongues, and are unable to conceal from the fellow-women those things which by evil arts they know; and, since they are weak, they find an easy and secret manner of vindicating themselves by witchcraft. See *Ecclesiasticus* as quoted above: I had rather dwell with a lion and a dragon than to keep house with a wicked woman. All wickedness is but little to the wickedness of a woman. And to this may be added that, as they are very impressionable, they act accordingly.

There are also others who bring forward yet other reasons, of which preachers should be very careful how they make use. For it is true that in the Old Testament the Scriptures have much that is evil to say about women, and this because of the first temptress, Eve, and her imitators; yet afterwards in the New Testament we find a change of name, as from Eva to Ave (as S. Jerome says), and the whole sin of Eve taken away by the benediction of Mary. Therefore preachers should always say as much praise of them as possible.

But because in these times this perfidy is more often found in women than in men, as we learn by actual experience, if anyone is curious as to the reason, we may add to what has already been said the following: that since they are feebler both in mind and body, it is not surprising that they should come more under the spell of witchcraft.

For as regards intellect, or the understanding of spiritual things, they seem to be of a different nature from men; a fact which is vouched for by the logic of the authorities, backed by various examples from the Scriptures. [Terence](#) says: Women are intellectually like children. And



Lactantius (*Institutiones*, III): No woman understood philosophy except [Temeste](#). And *Proverbs* xi, as it were describing a woman, says: As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.

But the natural reason is that she is more carnal than a man, as is clear from her many carnal abominations. And it should be noted that there was a defect in the formation of the first woman, since she was formed from a bent rib, that is, a rib of the breast, which is bent as it were in a contrary direction to a man. And since through this defect she is an imperfect animal, she always deceives. For Cato says: When a woman weeps she weaves snares. And again: When a woman weeps, she labours to deceive a man. And this is shown by Samson's wife, who coaxed him to tell her the riddle he had propounded to the Philistines, and told them the answer, and so deceived him. And it is clear in the case of the first woman that she had little faith; for when the serpent asked why they did not eat of every tree in Paradise, she answered: Of every tree, etc. - lest perchance we die. Thereby she showed that she doubted, and had little in the word of God. And all this is indicated by the etymology of the word; for *Femina* comes from *Fe* and *Minus*, since she is ever weaker to hold and preserve the faith. And this as regards faith is of her very nature; although both by grace and nature faith never failed in the Blessed Virgin, even at the time of Christ's Passion, when it failed in all men.

Therefore a wicked woman is by her nature quicker to waver in her faith, and consequently quicker to abjure the faith, which is the root of witchcraft.

And as to her other mental quality, that is, her natural will; when she hates someone whom she formerly loved, then she seethes with anger and impatience in her whole soul, just as the tides of the sea are always heaving and boiling. Many authorities allude to this cause. *Ecclesiasticus* xxv: There is no wrath above the wrath of a woman. And Seneca (*Tragedies*, VIII): [No might of the flames or the swollen winds, no deadly weapon, is so much to be feared as the lust and hatred of a woman who has been divorced from the marriage bed.](#)

This is shown too in the woman who falsely accused Joseph, and caused him to be imprisoned because he would not consent to the crime of adultery with her (*Genesis* xxx). And truly the most powerful cause which contributes to the increase of witches is the woeful rivalry between married folk and unmarried women and men. This is so even among holy women, so what must it be among the others? For you see in *Genesis* xxi. how impatient and envious Sarah was of Hagar when she conceived: How jealous Rachel was of Leah because she had no children (*Genesis* xxx): and Hannah, who was barren, of the fruitful Peninnah (I. *Kings* i): and how Miriam (*Numbers* xii) murmured and spoke ill of Moses, and was therefore stricken with leprosy: and how Martha was jealous of Mary Magdalen, because she was busy and Mary was sitting down (*S. Luke* x). To this point is *Ecclesiasticus* xxxvii: Neither consult with a woman touching her of whom she is jealous. Meaning that it is useless to consult with her, since there is always jealousy, that is, envy, in a wicked woman. And if women behave thus to each other, how much more will they do so to men.

## Question VI Continued . . . .

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*“S. Dominic.” Before the birth of S. Dominic, his mother, Blessed Joanna d’Aza, dreamed that she had brought forth a black-and-white dog carrying in his mouth a lighted torch. The dog with the torch is accordingly the pictorial attribute of the Saint. Nor must the play upon the name of his sons be forgotten - Dominicani, Domini canes, Hounds of the Lord.*

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*“S. John Chrysostom.” Born at Antioch, 347; died at Comana in Pontus, 14 September, 407. His fifty-nine homilies “On the Psalms” (iv-xii, xli, xliii-xlix, cviii-cxvii, cxix-cl) are very famous. For a full study of these see Baur's “Der ursprüngliche Umfang des Kommentars des hl. Joh. Chrysostomus zu den Psalmen” in Χρυσσοστομικά, fasc. I, Rome, 1908.*

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*“S. Matthew.” The ninety Homilies on S. Matthew were written about the year 390.*

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*“Gilia.” Rather Gisela, the devout sister of Duke Henry of Bavaria (the future Emperor S. Henry II); in 995 married S. Stephen of Hungary, who succeeded to the throne in 997. She was untiring in her efforts to spread the Faith throughout the kingdom. The coronation mantle of Hungary, a purple damask cope, embroidered in silk and gold by Queen Gisela, dated 1031, is preserved in Budapest.*

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*“Clotilda.” Born probably at Lyons about 474; dies at Tours, 3 June, 545. The feast of S. Clotilda is celebrated 3 June. From the sixth century onwards, the marriage of Clovis I, King of the Salic Franks, and Clotilda, which took place in 492 or 493, was made the theme of epic narratives and many legends. Clotilda soon acquired a great ascendancy over her husband, and she availed herself of this influence to win him to the Catholic Faith. For a time her efforts seemed unavailing, but Clovis, who in a great battle against the Alemannis saw his men on the point of defeat, invoked the God of his wife, promising to become a Christian if only victory should be granted to the Franks. The tide instantly turned, and, true to his word, he was baptized at Reims by S. Remigius at Christmas, 496. His sister and three thousand of his noblest warriors at the same time embraced the Faith. Thus, S. Clotilda was the instrument in the conversion of a mighty people.*

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“Terence.” “Hecrya,” III, i, 30-32:

*Peuri inter sese quam pro leuibus noxiis iras gerunt!*

*Qua propter? quia enim, qui eos gubernaut animus, infirmum gerunt.*

*Itidem illæ mulieres sunt ferme, ut pueri, leui sententia.*

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*“Temeste.” “Denique nullas unquam mulieres philosophari docuerunt praeter unam ex omni memoria Themisten.” III, xxv. But on this Xistus Betulaeus (ed. 1556) glosses: “Putat fortasse Leontii coniugem, as quam Epicurus scripsisse legitur. Quid dicemus de Thermistoclea, Pythagorae sorore? quid de aliis pluribus quarum bene longum catalogum Textor recenset?”*

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*“Seneca.” “Medea,” 579-82.*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I.* *QUESTION VI. CONTINUED . . . .*

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Valerius Maximus tells how, when Phoroneus, the king of the Greeks, was dying, he said to his brother Leontius that there would have been nothing lacking to him of complete happiness if a wife had always been lacking to him. And when Leontius asked how a wife could stand in the way of happiness, he answered that all married men well knew. And when the philosopher Socrates was asked if one should marry a wife, he answered: If you do not, you are lonely, your family dies out, and a stranger inherits; if you do, you suffer perpetual anxiety, querulous complaints, reproaches concerning the marriage portion, the heavy displeasure of your relations, the garrulousness of a mother-in-law, cuckoldom, and no certain arrival of an heir. This he said as one who knew. For S. Jerome in his [Contra Iovinianum](#) says: This Socrates had two wives, whom he endured with much patience, but could not be rid of their contumelies and clamorous vituperations. So one day when they were complaining against him, he went out of the house to escape their plaguing, and sat down before the house; and the women then threw filthy water over him. But the philosopher was not disturbed by this, saying, "I knew the rain would come after the thunder."

There is also a story of a man whose wife was drowned in a river, who, when he was searching for the body to take it out of the water, walked up the stream. And when he was asked why, since heavy bodies do not rise but fall, he was searching against the current of the river, he answered: "When that woman was alive she always, both in word and deed, went contrary to my commands; therefore I am searching in the contrary direction in case even now she is dead she may preserve her contrary disposition."

And indeed, just as through the first defect in their intelligence that are more prone to abjure the faith; so through their second defect of inordinate affections and passions they search for, brood over, and inflict various vengeance, either by witchcraft, or by some other means. Wherefore it is no wonder that so great a number of witches exist in this sex.

Women also have weak memories; and it is a natural vice in them not to be disciplined, but to follow their own impulses without any sense of what is due; this is her whole study, and all that she keeps in her memory. So Theophrastus says: If you hand over the whole management of the house to her, but reserve some minute detail to your own judgement, she will think that you are displaying a great want of faith in her, and will stir up a strife; and unless you quickly take counsel, she will prepare poison for you, and consult seers and soothsayers; and will become a witch.

But as to domination by women, hear what Cicero says in the *Paradoxes*. Can he be called a free man whose wife governs him, imposes laws on him, orders him, and forbids him to do what he wishes, so that he cannot and dare not deny her anything that she asks? I should call him not only a slave, but the vilest of slaves, even if he comes from the noblest family. And Seneca, in the character of the raging [Medea](#), says: Why do you cease to follow your happy impulse; how great is

that part of vengeance in which you rejoice? Where he adduces many proofs that a woman will not be governed, but will follow her own impulse even to her own destruction. In the same way we read of many women who have killed themselves either for love or sorrow because they were unable to work their vengeance.

S. Jerome, writing of Daniel, tells a story of Laodice, wife of Antiochus king of Syria; how, being jealous lest he should love his other wife, Berenice, more than her, she first caused Berenice and her daughter by Antiochus to be slain, and then poisoned herself. And why? Because she would not be governed, and would follow her own impulse. Therefore, S. John Chrysostom says not without reason: O evil worse than all evil, a wicked woman, whether she be poor or rich. For if she be the wife of a rich man, she does not cease night and day to excite her husband with hot words, to use evil blandishments and violent importunations. And if she have a poor husband she does not cease to stir him also to anger and strife. And if she be a widow, she takes it upon herself everywhere to look down on everybody, and is inflamed to all boldness by the spirit of pride.

If we inquire, we find that nearly all the kingdoms of the world have been overthrown by women. Troy, which was a prosperous kingdom, was, for the rape of one woman, Helen, destroyed, and many thousands of Greeks slain. The kingdom of the Jews suffered much misfortune and destruction through the accursed Jezebel, and her daughter Athaliah, queen of Judah, who caused her son's sons to be killed, that on their death she might reign herself; yet each of them was slain. The kingdom of the Romans endured much evil through Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, that worst of women. And so with others. Therefore it is no wonder if the world now suffers through the malice of women.

And now let us examine the carnal desires of the body itself, whence has arise unconscionable harm to human life. Justly we may say with Cato of Utica: If the world could be rid of women, we should not be without God in our intercourse. For truly, without the wickedness of women, to say nothing of witchcraft, the world would still remain proof against innumerable dangers. Hear what Valerius said to Rufinus: You do not know that woman is the Chimaera, but it is good that you should know it; for that monster was of three forms; its face was that of a radiant and noble lion, it had the filthy belly of a goat, and it was armed with the virulent tail of a viper. And he means that a woman is beautiful to look upon, contaminating to the touch, and deadly to keep.

Let us consider another property of hers, the voice. For as she is a liar by nature, so in her speech she stings while she delights us. Wherefore her voice is like the song of the Sirens, who with their sweet melody entice the passers-by and kill them. For they kill them by emptying their purses, consuming their strength, and causing them to forsake God. Again Valerius says to Rufinus: When she speaks it is a delight which flavours the sin; the flower of love is a rose, because under its blossom there are hidden many thorns. See *Proverbs* v, 3-4: Her mouth is smoother than oil; that is, her speech is afterwards as bitter as absinthium. [Her throat is smoother than oil. But her end is as bitter as wormwood.]

Let us consider also her gait, posture, and habit, in which is vanity of vanities. There is no man in the world who studies so hard to please the good God as even an ordinary woman studies by her vanities to please men. An example of this is to be found in the life of [Pelagia](#), a worldly woman who was wont to go about Antioch tired and adorned most extravagantly. A holy father, named Nonnus, saw her and began to weep, saying to his companions, that never in all his life had he used such diligence to please God; and much more he added to this effect, which is preserved in his orations.

It is this which is lamented in *Ecclesiastes* vii, and which the Church even now laments on

account of the great multitude of witches. And I have found a woman more bitter than death, who is the hunter's snare, and her heart is a net, and her hands are bands. He that pleaseth God shall escape from her; but he that is a sinner shall be caught by her. More bitter than death, that is, than the devil: *Apocalypse* vi, 8, His name was Death. For though the devil tempted Eve to sin, yet Eve seduced Adam. And as the sin of Eve would not have brought death to our soul and body unless the sin had afterwards passed on to Adam, to which he was tempted by Eve, not by the devil, therefore she is more bitter than death.

More bitter than death, again, because that is natural and destroys only the body; but the sin which arose from woman destroys the soul by depriving it of grace, and delivers the body up to the punishment of sin.

More bitter than death, again, because bodily death is an open and terrible enemy, but woman is a wheedling and secret enemy.

And that she is more perilous than a snare does not speak of the snare of hunters, but of devils. For men are caught not only through their carnal desires, when they see and hear women: for S. Bernard says: Their face is a burning wind, and their voice the hissing of serpents: but they also cast wicked spells on countless men and animals. And when it is said that her heart is a net, it speaks of the inscrutable malice which reigns in their hearts. And her hands are as bands for binding; for when they place their hands on a creature to bewitch it, then with the help of the devil, they perform their design.

To conclude. All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable. See *Proverbs* xxx: There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, a fourth thing which says not, It is enough; that is, the mouth of the womb. Wherefore for the sake of fulfilling their lusts they consort even with devils. More such reasons could be brought forward, but to the understanding it is sufficiently clear that it is no matter for wonder that there are more women than men found infected with the heresy of witchcraft. And in consequence of this, it is better called the heresy of witches than of wizards, since the name is taken from the more powerful party. And blessed be the Highest Who has so far preserved the male sex from so great a crime: for since He was willing to be born and to suffer for us, therefore He has granted to men the privilege.

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*What sort of Women are found to be above all Others Superstitious and Witches.*

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As to our second inquiry, what sort of women more than others are found to be superstitious and infected with witchcraft; it must be said, as was shown in the preceding inquiry, that three general vices appear to have special dominion over wicked women, namely, infidelity, ambition, and lust. Therefore they are more than others inclined towards witchcraft, who more than others are given to these vices. Again, since of these vices the last chiefly predominates, women being insatiable, etc., it follows that those among ambitious women are more deeply infected who are more hot to satisfy their filthy lusts; and such are adulteresses, fornicatresses, and the concubines of the Great.

Now there are, as it is said in the Papal Bull, seven methods by which they infect with witchcraft the venereal act and the conception of the womb: First, by inclining the minds of men to inordinate passion; second, by obstructing their generative force; third, by removing the members accommodated to that act; fourth, by changing men into beasts by their magic art; fifth, by destroying the generative force in women; sixth, by procuring abortion; seventh, by offering children to devils, besides other animals and fruits of the earth with which they work much harm. And all these will be considered later; but for present let us give our minds to the injuries towards

men.

And first concerning those who are bewitched into an inordinate love or hatred, this is a matter of a sort that it is difficult to discuss before the general intelligence. Yet it must be granted that it is a fact. For S. Thomas (IV, 34), treating of obstructions caused by witches, shows that God allows the devil greater power against men's venereal acts than against their other actions; and gives this reason, that this is likely to be so, since those women are chiefly apt to be witches who are most disposed to such acts.

For he says that, since the first corruption of sin by which man became the slave of the devil came to us through the act of generation, therefore greater power is allowed by God to the devil in this act than in all others. Also the power of witches is more apparent in serpents, as it is said, than in other animals, because through the means of a serpent the devil tempted woman. For this reason also, as is shown afterwards, although matrimony is a work of God, as being instituted by Him, yet it is sometimes wrecked by the work of the devil: not indeed through main force, since then he might be though stronger than God, but with the permission of God, by causing some temporary or permanent impediment in the conjugal act.

And touching this we may say what is known by experience; that these women satisfy their filthy lists not only in themselves, but even in the mighty ones of the age, of whatever state and condition; causing by all sorts of witchcraft the death of their souls through the excessive infatuation of carnal love, in such a way that for no shame or persuasion can they desist from such acts. And through such men, since witches will not permit any harm to come to them either from themselves or from others once they have them in their power, there arises the great danger of the time, namely, the extermination of the Faith. And in this way do witches every day increase.

And would that this were not true according to experience. But indeed such hatred is aroused by witchcraft between those joined in the sacrament of matrimony, and such freezing up of the generative forces, that men are unable to perform the necessary action for begetting offspring. But since love and hate exist in the soul, which even the devil cannot enter, lest these things should seem incredibly to anyone, they must be inquired into; and by meeting argument with argument the matter will be made clear.

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## [Question VII](#)

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*“Contra Iouinianum.” This treatise was written 392-93.*

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*“Medea.” V, 895-6:*

*Quid, anime, cessas sequere felicem impetum?*

*Pars ultonis ista, qua gaudes, quota est?*

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*“Pelagia.” “Pelagia meretrix” or “Pelagia mima,” a beautiful actress who led the life of a prostitute at Antioch. She was converted by the holy bishop Nonnus, and disguised as a man went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where for many years she led the life of extremist mortification and penance in a grotto on the Mount of Olives. This “ienheureuse pécheresse” attained to such heights of sanctity that she was canonized, and in the East, where her cult was long very popular, her festival is kept on 8 October, which is also the day of her commemoration in the Roman Martyrology.*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION VII.*

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*Whether Witches can Sway the Minds of Men to Love or Hatred.*

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It is asked whether devils, through the medium of witches, can change or incite the minds of men to inordinate love or hatred; and it is argued that, following the previous conclusions, they cannot do so. For there are three things in man: will, understanding, and body. The first is ruled by God (for, The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord); the second is enlightened by an Angel; and the body is governed by the motions of the stars. And as the devils cannot effect changes in the body, even less have they power to incite love or hatred in the soul. The consequence is clear; that though they have more power over things corporeal than over things spiritual, they cannot change even the body, as has been often proved. For they cannot induce any substantial or accidental form, except is as it were their artificer. In this connexion is quoted what has been said before; that whoever believes that any creature can be changed for the better or worse or transformed into another kind or likeness, except by the Creator of all things, is worse than a pagan and a heretic.

Besides, everything that acts with design knows its own effect. If, therefore, the devil could change the minds of men to hatred or love, he would also be able to see the inner thoughts of the heart; but this is contrary to what is said in the Book of Ecclesiastic Dogma: The devil cannot see our inner thoughts. And again in the same place: Not all our evil thoughts are from the devil, but sometimes they arise from our own choice.

Besides, love and hatred are a matter of the will, which is rooted in the soul; therefore they cannot by any cunning be caused by the devil. The conclusion holds that He alone (as S. Augustine says) is able to enter into the soul, Who created it.

Besides, it is not valid to argue that because he can influence the inner emotions, therefore he can govern the will. For the emotions are stronger than physical strength; and the devil can effect nothing in a physical way, such as the formation of flesh and blood; therefore he can effect nothing through the emotions.

*But against this.* The devil is said to tempt men not only visibly but also invisibly; but this would not be true unless he were able to exert some influence over the inner mind. Besides, S. John Damascene says: All evil and all filthiness is devised by the devil. And Dionysius, *de Divin. Nom.* IV: The multitude of devils is the cause of all evil, etc.

*Answer.* First, one sort of cause is to be distinguished from another: secondly, we shall show how the devil can affect the inner powers of the mind, that is the emotions; and thirdly, we shall draw the fit conclusion. And as to the first, it is to be considered that the cause of anything can be understood in two ways; either as direct, or as indirect. For when something cause a disposition to some effect, it is said to be an occasional and indirect cause of that effect. In this way it may be said that he who chops wood is the cause of the actual fire. And similarly we may say that the

devil is the cause of all our sins; for he incited the first man to sin, from whose sin it has been handed down to the whole human race to have an inclination towards sin. And in this way are to be understood the words of S. John Damascene and Dionysius.

But a direct cause is one that directly causes an effect; and in this sense the devil is not the cause of all sin. For all sins are not committed at the instigation of the devil, but some are of our own choosing. For Origen says: Even if the devil were not, men would still lust after food and venery and such things. And from these inordinate lusts much may result, unless such appetites be reasonably restrained. But to restrain such ungoverned desire is the part of man's free-will, over which even the devil has no power.

And because this distinction is not sufficient to explain how the devil at times produces a frantic infatuation of love, it is further to be noted that though he cannot cause that inordinate love by directly compelling a man's will, yet he can do so by means of persuasion. And this again in two ways, either visibly or invisibly. Visibly, when he appears to witches in the form of a man, and speaks to them materially, persuading them to sin. So he tempted our first parents in Paradise in the form of a serpent; and so he tempted Christ in the wilderness, appearing to Him in visible form.

But it is not to be thought that this is the only way he influences a man; for in that case no sin would proceed from the devil's instruction, except such as were suggested by him in visible form. Therefore it must be said that even invisibly he instigates man to sin. And this he does in two ways, either by persuasion or by disposition. By persuasion, he presents something to the understanding as being a good thing. And this he can do in three ways; for he presents it either to the intellect, or to the inner perceptions, or to the outer. And as for the intellect; the human intellect can be helped by a good Angel to understand a thing by means of enlightenment, as Dionysius says; and to understand a thing, according to Aristotle, is to suffer something; therefore the devil can impress some form upon the intellect, by which the act of understanding is called forth.

And it may be argued that the devil can do this by his natural power, which is not, as had been shown, diminished. *It is to be said*, however, that he cannot do this by means of enlightenment, but by persuasion. For the intellect of man is of that condition that, the more it is enlightened, the more it knows the truth, and the more it can defend itself from deception. And because the devil intends his deception to be permanent, therefore no persuasion that he uses can be called enlightenment: although it may be called revelation, in that when he invisibly uses persuasion, by means of some impression he plants something on the inner or outer sense. And by this the reasoning intellect is persuaded to perform some action.

But as to how he is enabled to create an impression on the inner sense, *it is to be noted* that the bodily nature is naturally born to be moved locally by the spiritual; which is clear from the case of our own bodies, which are moved by souls; and the same is the case with the stars. But it is not by nature adapted to be directly subject to influences, by which we mean outside influences, not those with which it is informed. Wherefore the concurrence of some bodily agent is necessary, as is proved in the 7th book of the *Metaphysics*. Corporeal matter naturally obeys a good or bad angel as to the local motion; and it is due to this that devils can through motion collect semen, and employ it for the production of wonderful results. This was how it happened that Pharaoh's magicians produced serpents and actual animals, when corresponding active and passive agents were brought together. Therefore there is nothing to prevent the devils from effecting anything that appertains to the local motion of corporeal matter, unless God prevent it.

And now let us examine how the devil can through local motion excite the fancy and inner sensory perceptions of a man by apparitions and impulsive actions. It is to be noted that Aristotle

(*De Somno et Uigilia*) assigns the cause of apparitions in dreams through local motion to the fact that, when an animal sleeps the blood flows to the inmost seat of the senses, from which descend motions or impressions which remain from past impressions preserved in the mind or inner perception; and these are Fancy or Imagination, which are the same thing according to S. Thomas, as will be shown.

For fancy or imagination is as it were the treasury of ideas received through the senses. And through this it happens that devils stir up the inner perceptions, that is the power of conserving images, that they appear to be a new impression at that moment received from exterior things.

It is true that all do not agree to this; but if anyone wishes to occupy himself with this question, he must consider the number and the office of the inner perceptions. According to Avicenna, in his book *On the Mind*, these are five: namely, Common Sense, Fancy, Imagination, Thought, and Memory. But S. Thomas, in the First Part of Question 79, says that they are only four, since Fancy and Imagination are the same thing. For fear of prolixity I omit much more that has variously been said on this subject.

Only this must be said; that fancy is the treasury of ideas, but memory appears to be something different. For fancy is the treasury or repository of ideas received through the senses; but memory is the treasury of instincts, which are not received through the senses. For when a man sees a wolf, he runs away, not because of its ugly colour or appearance, which are ideas received through the outer senses and conserved in his fancy; but he runs away because the wolf is his natural enemy. And this he knows through some instinct or fear, which is apart from thought, which recognized the wolf as hostile, but a dog as friendly. But the repository of those instincts is memory. And reception and retention are two different things in animal nature; for those who are of a humid disposition receive readily, but retain badly; and the contrary is the case of those with a dry humour.

To return to the question. The apparitions that come in dreams to sleepers proceed from the ideas retained in the repository of their mind, through a natural local motion caused by the flow of blood to the first and inmost seat of their faculties of perception; and we speak of an intrinsic local motion in the head and the cells of the brain.

And this can also happen through a similar local motion created by devils. Also such things happen not only to the sleeping, but even to those who are awake. For in these also the devils can stir up and excite the inner perceptions and humours, so that ideas retained in the repositories of their minds are drawn out and made apparent to the faculties of fancy and imagination, so that such men imagine these things to be true. And this is called interior temptation.

And it is no wonder that the devil can do this by his own natural power; since any man by himself, being awake and having the use of his reason, can voluntarily draw from his repositories the images he has retained in them; in such a way that he can summon to himself the images of whatsoever things he pleases. And this being granted, it is easy to understand the matter of excessive infatuation in love.

Now there are two ways in which devils can, as has been said, raise up this kind of images. Sometimes they work without enchaining the human reason, as has been said in the matter of temptation, and the example of voluntary imagination. But sometimes the use of reason is entirely chained up; and this may be exemplified by certain naturally defective persons, and by madmen and drunkards. Therefore it is no wonder that devils can, with God's permission, chain up the reason; and such men are called delirious, because their senses have been snatched away by the devil. And this they do in two ways, either with or without the help of witches. For Aristotle, in the work we have quoted, says that anyone who lives in passion is moved by only a little thing, as a

lover by the remotest likeness of his love, and similarly with one who feels hatred. Therefore devils, who have learned from men's acts to which passions they are chiefly subject, incite them to this sort of inordinate love or hatred, impressing their purpose on men's imagination the more strongly and effectively, as they can do so the more easily. And this is the more easy for a lover to summon up the image of his love from his memory, and retain it pleasurably in his thoughts.

But they work by witchcraft when they do these things through and at the instance of witches, by reason of a pact entered into with them. But it is not possible to treat of such matters in detail, on account of the great number of instances both among the clergy and among the laity. For how many adulterers have put away the most beautiful wives to lust after the vilest of women!

We know of an old woman who, according to the common account of the brothers in that monastery even up to this day, in this manner not only bewitched three successive Abbots, but even killed them, and in the same way drove the fourth out of his mind. For she herself publicly confessed it, and does not fear to say: I did so and I do so, and they are not able to keep from loving me because they have eaten so much of my dung - measuring off a certain length on her arm. I confess, moreover, that since we had no case to prosecute her or bring her to trial, she survives to this day.

It will be remembered that it was said that the devil invisibly lures a man to sin, not only by means of persuasion, as has been said, but also by the means of disposition. Although this is not very pertinent, yet be it said that by a similar admonition of the disposition and humours of men, he renders some more disposed to anger, or concupiscence, or other passions. For it is manifest that a man who has a body so disposed is more prone to concupiscence and anger and such passions; and when they are aroused, he is more apt to surrender to them. But because it is difficult to quote precedents, therefore an easier method must be found of declaring them for the admonition of the people. And in the Second Part of this book we treat of the remedies by which men so bewitched can be set free.

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## [Question VII Continued . . . .](#)

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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*PART I.  
QUESTION VII. CONTINUED . . . .*

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*The Method of Preaching to the People about Infatuate Love.*

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Concerning what has been said above, a preacher asks this question: Is it a Catholic view to maintain that witches can infect the minds of men with an inordinate love of strange women, and so inflame their hearts that by no shame or punishment, by no words or actions can they be forced to desist from such love; and that similarly they can stir up such hatred between married couples that they are unable in any way to perform the procreant functions of marriage; so that, indeed, in the untimely silence of night, they cover great distances in search of mistresses and irregular lovers?

As to this matter, he may, if he wishes, find some arguments in the preceding question. Otherwise, it need only be said that there are difficulties in those questions on account of love and hate. For these passions invade the will, which is in its own act always free, and not to be coerced by any creature except God, Who can govern it. From which it is clear that neither the devil nor a witch working by his power can force a man's will to love or to hate. Again, since the will, like the understanding, exists subjectively in the soul, and He alone can enter into the soul Who created it, therefore this question presents many difficulties in the matter of unravelling the truth of it.

But notwithstanding this, we must speak first of infatuation and hatred, and secondly about the bewitching of the generative power. And as to the first, although the devil cannot directly operate upon the understanding and will of man, yet, according to all the learned Theologians in the 2nd *Book of Sentences*, on the subject of the power of the devil, he can act upon the body, or upon the faculties belonging to or allied to the body, whether they be the inner or outer perceptions. This is authoritatively and reasonably proved in the preceding question, if one cares to look; but if not, there is the authority of Job ii: The Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand. That is, Job is in his power. But this was only in regard to the body, for He would not give his soul into his power. Wherefore He said: Only save thou his life; that is, keep it unharmed. And that power He gave him over his body, He gave also over all the faculties allied to the body, which are the four or five outer and inner perceptions, namely Common Sense, Fancy or Imagination, Thought, and Memory.

If no other instance can be given, let us take an example from pigs and sheep. For pigs know by instinct their way home. And by natural instinct sheep distinguish a wolf from a dog, knowing one to be the enemy and the other the friend of their nature.

Consequently, since all our reasoned knowledge comes from the senses (for Aristotle in the 2nd book *On the Mind* says that an intelligent man must take notice of phantasms), therefore the devil can affect the inner fancy, and darken the understanding. And this is not to act immediately upon the mind, but through the medium of phantasms. Because, also, nothing is loved until it is known.

As many examples as are needed could be taken from gold, which the miser loves because he knows its power, etc. Therefore when the understanding is darkened, the will also is darkened in its affectations. Moreover, the devil can effect this either with or without the help of a witch; and such things can even happen through mere want of foresight. But we shall give examples of each kind. For, as it is said in *S. James* i: Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Again, when Schechem saw Dinah going out to see the daughters of the land, he loved her, and seized her, and lay with her, and his soul clave unto her (*Genesis xxxiv*). And according to the gloss: When the infirm mind forsakes its own business, and takes heed, like Dinah, of that of other people, it is led astray by habit, and becomes one with the sinners.

Secondly, that this lust can arise apart from witchcraft, and simply through the temptation of the devil, is shown as follows. For we read in II. *Samuel* xiii that Ammon desperately loved his own sister Tamar, and yearned greatly for her, so that he grew ill for love for her. But no one would fall into so great and foul a crime unless he were totally corrupt, and grievously tempted by the devil. Wherefore the gloss says: This is a warning to us, and was permitted by God that we should always be on guard lest vice should get the mastery over us, and the prince of sin, who promises a false peace to those who are in danger, finding us ready should slay us unaware.

Mention is made of this sort of passion in the Book of the Holy Fathers, where it says that, however far they withdrew themselves from all carnal lusts, yet they were sometimes tempted by the love of women more than could possibly be believed. Wherefore in II. *Corinthians* xii the Apostle says: There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. On which the gloss says: It was given to me to be tempted by lust. But he who is tempted and does not yield is no sinner, but it is a matter for the exercise of virtue. And by temptation is understood that of the devil, not that of the flesh, which is always venial in a little sin. The preacher could find many examples if he pleased.

The third point, that infatuate love proceeds from the evil works of the devil, has been discussed above; and we speak of this temptation.

It may be asked how it is possible to tell whether such inordinate love proceeds not from the devil but only from a witch. And the answer is that there are many ways. First, if the man tempted has a beautiful and honest wife, or the converse in the case of a woman, etc. Secondly, if the judgement of the reason is so chained up that by no blows or words or deeds, or even by shame, can he be made to desist from that lust. And thirdly, in especial, when he cannot contain himself, but that he is at times unexpectedly, and in spite of the roughness of the journey, forced to be carried through great distances (as anyone can learn from the confessions of such men), both by day and by night. For as *S. John Chrysostom* says on *Matthew* xx concerning the ass upon which Christ rode: When the devil possesses the will of a man with sin, he carries him at his will where he pleases. Giving the example of a ship in the sea without a rudder, which the winds carry about at their pleasure; and of a man firmly sitting a horse; and a King having dominion over a tyrant. And fourthly, it is shown by the fact that they are sometimes suddenly and unexpectedly carried away, and at times transformed, so that nothing can prevent it. It is shown also by the hideousness of their very appearance.

And before we proceed to the further question of witches, touching the powers of generation, which follows, we must first resolve the arguments.

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*Here Follow the Resolutions of the Arguments.*

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But for the answer to the arguments: for the first, that the will of man is ruled by God, just as his understanding is by a good Angel, the solution is clear. For the intellect is enlightened by a good Angel only to the knowledge of the truth, from which proceeds the love of that which is good, for the True and the Actual are the same thing. So also the intellect can be darkened by a bad angel in the knowledge of what appear to be true; and this through a confusion of the ideas and images received and stored by the perceptions, from which comes an inordinate love of the apparently good, such as bodily delectation, which such men seek after.

As to the second argument, that the devil cannot effect physical changes in the body; this is in part true, and in part not, and this is with reference to three sorts of mutation. For the devil cannot change the body in such a way that its whole shape and appearance is altered (which is rather to be called a new production than a change) without the help of some agent, or with the permission of God. But if we speak of a change in quality, as in the matter of sickness and health, as has been shown before, he can inflict upon the body various diseases, even to taking away the reason, and so can cause inordinate hatred and love.

And a third kind of mutation can be added, which is when a good or bad angel enters into the body, in the same way that we say that God alone is able to enter into the soul, that is, the essence of life. But when we speak of an angel, especially a bad angel, entering the body, as in the case of an obsession, he does not enter beyond the limits of the essence of the body; for in this way only God the Creator can enter, Who gave it to be as it were the intrinsic operation of life. But the devil is said to enter the body when he effects something about the body: for when he works, there he is, as S. John Damascene says. And then he works within the bounds of corporeal matter, but not within the very essence of the body.

For this it appears that the body has two properties, matter and spirit. And this is like the distinction between the apparent and the real. Therefore when devils enter the body, they enter the power belonging to the bodily organs, and can so create impressions on those powers. And so it happens that through such operations and impressions a phantasm is projected before the understanding, such as the seeing of colours, as it is said in the 3rd book *de Anima*. And so this impression penetrates also to the will. For the will takes its conception of what is good from the intellect, according as the intellect accepts something as good either in truth or in appearance.

As for the third argument: a knowledge of the thoughts of the heart may come about in two ways, either from seeing their effects or by reading them actually in the intellect. In the first way they can be known not only by an angel, but even by man, although it will be shown that an angel has more skill in this matter. For sometimes the thoughts are made evident, not only by some external action, but even by a change in the countenance. And doctors also can discern some affections of the mind through the pulse. Wherefore S. Augustine says (*de Diuin. Daem.*) that sometimes it is very easy to tell a man's disposition, not only from his words, but from his very thoughts, which are signs of the soul expressed in the body; although in his book of Retractions he says that no definite rule can be laid down how this is done; and I think that he is reluctant to admit that the devil can know the inner thoughts of the heart.

From another point of view, the thoughts of the intellect and the affectations of the will can be known only by God. For the will of a rational creature is subject only to God, and He alone can work in it Who is its first cause and ultimate end. Therefore that which is in the will, or depends only on the will, is known only to God. Moreover, it is manifest what depends only on the will, if one considers things by their resultant actions. For when a man has the quality of knowledge, and the understanding that comes from it, he uses it when he wills.

It is proved, then, from what has been said, that a spirit cannot enter the soul, therefore he



cannot, naturally, see what is in the mind, especially what is in the inner depths of the soul. Wherefore, when it is argued that the devil cannot see the thoughts of the heart, and therefore cannot move the hearts of men to love or hatred, it is answered that he does learn men's thoughts through their visible effects, and is more skilful in this matter than man; and so by subtle ways he can move men to love and hatred, by creating phantasms and darkening the intellect.

And this must be said by way of comfort to relieve the apprehensions of the virtuous: that when the sensible exterior and bodily change which accompanied men's thoughts is so vague and indeterminate that the devil cannot by it arrive at any certain knowledge of the thoughts, especially when the virtuous at times take a little leisure from study and good works, he molests them then chiefly in dreams; as is known by experience. But when the physical effect of thought is strong and determinate, the devil can know by a man's appearance whether his thoughts are turned towards envy or luxury. But we find that it must be left an open question whether he can by this means have certain knowledge in respect of all circumstances, as such and such; although it is true that he can know such circumstances from their subsequent results.

And fourthly: although to enter the soul belongs only to God, yet it is possible for a good or bad angel to enter the body and the faculties allied to the body, in the manner which has been shown above. And in this way hatred and love can be aroused in such a man. For the other argument, that the powers of the spirit are greater than the physical powers, which themselves cannot be changed by the devil, in so far as they can be hastened or retarded in the flesh and bone. But he does this, not for the sake of impeding or stimulating the inner or outer perceptions, but for his own gain; since he derives his chief benefit by the deception of the senses and the delusion of the intellect.

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## [Question VIII](#)

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION VIII.*

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*Whether Witches can hebetate the Powers of Generation or obstruct the Venereal Act.*

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Now the fact that adulterous drabs and whores are chiefly given to witchcraft is substantiated by the spells which are cast by witches upon the act of generation. And to make the truth more clear, we will consider the arguments of those who are in disagreement with us on this matter. And first it is argued that such a bewitching is not possible, because if it were it would apply equally to those who are married; and if this were conceded, then, since matrimony is God's work and witchcraft is the devil's, the devil's work would be stronger than God's. But if it is allowed that it can only affect fornicators and the unmarried, this involves a return to the opinion that witchcraft does not really exist, but only in men's imagination; and this was refuted in the First Question. Or else some reason will be found why it should affect the unmarried and not the married; and the only possible reason is that matrimony is God's work. And since, according to the Theologians, this reason is not valid, there still remains the argument that it would make the devil's work stronger than God's; and since it would be unseemly to make such an assertion, it is also unseemly to maintain that the venereal act can be obstructed by witchcraft.

Again, the devil cannot obstruct the other natural actions, such as eating, walking and standing, as is apparent from the fact that, if he could, he could destroy the whole world.

Besides, since the venereal act is common to all women, if it were obstructed it would be so with reference to all women; but this is not so, and therefore the first argument is good. For the facts prove that it is not so; for when a man says that he has been bewitched, he is still quite capable as regards other women, though not with her with whom he is unable to copulate; and the reason for this is that he does not wish to, and therefore cannot effect anything in the matter.

On the contrary and true side is the chapter in the Decretals (If by sortilege, etc.): as is also the opinion of all the Theologians and Canonists, where they treat of the obstruction to marriage caused by witchcraft.

There is also another reason: that since the devil is more powerful than man, and a man can obstruct the generative powers by means of frigid herbs or anything else that can be thought of, therefore much more can the devil do this, since he has greater knowledge and cunning.

*Answer.* The truth is sufficiently evident from two matters which have already been argued, although the method of obstruction has not been specifically declared. For it has been shown that witchcraft does not exist only in men's imaginations, and not in fact; but that truly and actually innumerable bewitchments can happen, with the permission of God. It has been shown, too, that God permits it more in the case of the generative powers, because of their greater corruption, than in the case of other human actions. But concerning the method by which such obstruction is procured, it is to be noted that it does not affect only the generative powers, but also the powers of the imagination or fancy.

And as to this, Peter of Palude (III, 34) notes five methods. For he says that the devil, being a spirit, has power over a corporeal creature to cause or prevent a local motion. Therefore he can prevent bodies from approaching each other, either directly or indirectly, by interposing himself in some bodily shape. In this way it happened to the young man who was betrothed to an idol and nevertheless married a young maiden, and was consequently unable to copulate with her. Secondly, he can excite a man to that act, or freeze his desire for it, by the virtue of secret things of which he best knows the power. Thirdly, he can also disturb a man's perception and imagination as to make the woman appear loathsome to him: since he can, as had been said, influence the imagination. Fourthly, he can directly prevent the erection of that member which is adapted to fructification, just as he can prevent local motion. Fifthly, he can prevent the flow of the vital essence to the members in which lie the motive power; by closing as it were the seminary ducts, so that it does not descend to the generative channels, or falls back from them, or does not project from them, or in any of many ways fails in its function.

And he continues in agreement with what has been treated of above by other Doctors. For God allows the devil more latitude in respect of this act, through which sin was first spread abroad, than of other human acts. Similarly, serpents are more subject to magic spells than are other animals. And a little later he says: It is the same in the case of a woman, for the devil can so darken her understanding that she considers her husband so loathsome that not for all the world would she allow him to lie with her.

Later he wishes to find the reason why more men than women are bewitched in respect of that action; and he says that such obstruction generally occurs in the matter of erection, which can more easily happen to men; and therefore more men than women are bewitched. It might also be said that, the greater part of witches being women, they lust more for men than for women. Also they act in the despite of married women, finding every opportunity for adultery when the husband is able to copulate with other women but not with his own wife; and similarly the wife also has to seek other lovers.

He adds also that God allows the devil to afflict sinners more bitterly than the just. Wherefore the Angel said to Tobias: He gives the devil power over those who are given up to lust. But he has power also against the just sometimes, as in the case of Job, but not in respect of the genital functions. Wherefore they ought to devote themselves to confession and other good works, lest the iron remain in the wound, and it be in vain to apply remedies. So much for Peter. But the method of removing such effects will be shown in the Second Part of this work.

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*Some Incidental Doubts on the subject of Copulation  
prevented by Evil Spells are made Clear.*

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But incidentally, if it is asked why this function is sometimes obstructed in respect of one woman but not of another, the answer, according to S. Bonaventura, is this. Either the enchantress of witch afflicts in this way those persons upon whom the devil has determined; or it is because God will not permit it to be inflicted on certain persons. For the hidden purpose of God in this is obscure, as is shown in the case of the wife of Tobias. And he adds:

If it is asked how the devil does this, it is to be said that he obstructs the genital power, not intrinsically by harming the organ, but extrinsically by rendering it useless. Therefore, since it is an artificial and not a natural obstruction, he can make a man impotent towards one woman but not towards others: by taking away the inflammation of his lust for her, but not for other women, either through his own power, or through some herb or stone, or some occult natural means. And

this agrees with the words of Peter of Palude.

Besides, since impotency in this act is sometimes due to coldness of nature, or some natural defect, it is asked how it is possible to distinguish whether it is due to witchcraft or not. Hostiensis gives the answer in his *Summa* (but this must not be publicly preached): When the member is in no way stirred, and can never perform the act of coition, this is a sign of frigidity of nature; but when it is stirred and becomes erect, but yet cannot perform, it is a sign of witchcraft.

It is to be noted also that impotence of the member to perform the act is not the only bewitchment; but sometimes the woman is caused to be unable to conceive, or else she miscarries.

Note, moreover, that according to what is laid down by the Canons, whoever through desire of vengeance or for hatred does anything to a man or a woman to prevent them from begetting or conceiving must be considered a homicide. And note, further, that the Canon speaks of loose lovers who, to save their mistresses from shame, use contraceptives, such as potions, or herbs that contravene nature, without any help from devils. And such penitents are to be punished as homicides. But witches who do such things by witchcraft are by law punishable by the extreme penalty, as had been touched on above in the First Question.

And for a solution of the arguments; when it is objected that these things cannot happen to those joined together in matrimony, it is further to be noted that, even if the truth in this matter had not already been made sufficiently plain, yet these things can truly and actually happen just as much to those who are married as to those who are not. And the prudent reader who has plenty of books, will refer to the Theologians and the Canonists, especially where they speak of the impotent and bewitched. He will find them in agreement in condemning two errors: especially with regard to married people who seem to think that such bewitchment cannot happen to those who are joined in matrimony, advancing the reason that the devil cannot destroy the works of God.

And the first error which they condemn is that of those who say that there is no witchcraft in the world, but only in the imagination of men who, through their ignorance of hidden causes which no man yet understands, ascribe certain natural effects to witchcraft, as though they were effected not by hidden causes, but by devils working either by themselves or in conjunction with witches. And although all other Doctors condemn this error as a pure falsehood, yet S. Thomas impugns it more vigorously and stigmatizes it as actual heresy, saying that this error proceeds from the root of infidelity. And since infidelity in a Christian is accounted heresy, therefore such deserve to be suspected as heretics. And this matter was touched on in the First Question, though it was not there declared so plainly. For if anyone considers the other sayings of S. Thomas in other places, he will find the reasons why he affirms that such an error proceeds from the root of infidelity.

For in his questions concerning Sin, where he treats of devils, and in his first question, whether devils have bodies that naturally belong to them, among many other matters he makes mention of those who referred every physical effect to the virtue of the stars; to which they said that the hidden causes of terrestrial effects were subject. And he says: It must be considered that the Peripatetics, the followers of Aristotle, held that devils did not really exist; but that those things which are attributed to devils proceeded from the power of the stars and other natural phenomena. Wherefore S. Augustine says (*de Ciuitate Dei*, X), that it was the opinion of Porphyry that from herbs and animals, and certain sounds and voice, and from figures and figments observed in the motion of the stars, powers corresponding to the stars were fabricated on earth by men in order to explain various natural effect. And the error of these is plain, since they referred everything to hidden causes in the stars, holding that devils were only fabricated by the imagination of men.

But this opinion is clearly proved to be false by S. Thomas in the same work; for some works of devils are found which can in no way proceed from any natural cause. For example, when one

who is possessed by devil speaks in an unknown language; and many other devil's works are found, both in the Rhapsodic and the Necromantic arts, which can in no way proceed except from some Intelligence, which may be naturally good but is evil in its intention. And therefore, because of these incongruities, other Philosophers were compelled to admit that there were devils. Yet they afterwards fell into various errors, some thinking that the souls of men, when they left their bodies, became devils. For this reason many Soothsayers have killed children, that they might have their souls as their co-operators; and many other errors are recounted.

From this it is clear that not without reason does the Holy Doctor say that such an opinion proceeds from the root of infidelity. And anyone who wishes may read S. Augustine (*de Ciuitate Dei*, VIII, IX) on the various errors of infidels concerning the nature of devils. And indeed the common opinion of all Doctors, quoted in the above-mentioned work, against those who err in this way by denying that there are any witches, is very weighty in its meaning, even if it is expressed in few words. For they say that they who maintain that there is no witchcraft in the world go contrary to the opinion of all the Doctors, and of the Holy Scripture; and declare that there are devils, and that devils have power over the bodies and imaginations of men, with the permission of God. Wherefore, those who are the instruments of the devils, at whose instance the devil at times do mischief to a creature, they call witches.

Now in the Doctor's condemnation of this first error nothing is said concerning those joined together in matrimony; but this is made clear in their condemnation of the second error of believing that, though witchcraft exists and abounds in the world, even against carnal copulation, yet, since no such bewitchment can be considered to be permanent, it never annuls a marriage that has already been contracted. Here is where they speak of those joined in matrimony. Now in refuting this error (for we do so, even though it is little to the point, for the sake of those who have not many books), it is to be noted that they refute it by maintaining that it is against all precedent, and contrary to all laws both ancient and modern.

Wherefore the Catholic Doctors make the following distinction, that impotence caused by witchcraft is either temporary or permanent. And if it is temporary, then it does not annul the marriage. Moreover, it is presumed to be temporary if they are able to be healed of the impediment within three years from their cohabitation, having taken all possible pain, either through the sacraments of the Church, or through other remedies, to be cured. But if they are not then cured by any remedy, from that time it is presumed to be permanent. And in that case it either precedes both the contracting of a marriage, and annuls one that is not yet contracted; or else it follows the contract of marriage but precedes its consummation, and then also, according to some, it annuls the previous contract. (For it is said in Book XXXII, quest. 1. cap. 1 that the confirmation of a marriage consists in its carnal office.) Or else it is subsequent to the consummation of the marriage, and then the matrimonial bond is not annulled. Much is noted there concerning impotence by Hostiensis, and Godfrey, and the Doctors and Theologians.

*To the arguments.* As to the first, it is made sufficiently clear from what has been said. For as to the argument that God's works can be destroyed by the devil's works, if witchcraft has power against those who are married, it has no force; rather does the opposite appear, since the devil can do nothing without God's permission. For he does not destroy by main force like a tyrant, but through some extrinsic art, as is proved above. And the second argument is also made quite clear, why God allows this obstruction more in the case of the venereal act than of other acts. But the devil has power also over other acts, when God permits. Wherefore it is not sound to argue that he could destroy the whole world. And the third objection is similarly answered by what has been said.

## [Question IX](#)

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION IX.*

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*Whether Witches may work some Prestidigatory Illusion so that the Male Organ appears to be entirely removed and separate from the Body.*

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Here is declared the truth about diabolic operations with regard to the male organ. And to make plain the facts in this matter, it is asked whether witches can with the help of devils really and actually remove the member, or whether they only do so apparently by some glamour or illusion. And that they can actually do so is argued *a fortiori*; for since devils can do greater things than this, as killing them or carrying them from place to place - as was shown above in the cases of Job and Tobias - therefore they can also truly and actually remove men's members.

Again, an argument is taken from the gloss on the visitations of bad Angels, in the Psalms: God punishes by means of bad Angels, as He often punished the People of Israel with various diseases, truly and actually visited upon their bodies. Therefore the member is equally subject to such visitations.

It may be said that this is done with the Divine permission. And in that case, it has already been said that God allows more power of witchcraft over the genital functions, on account of the first corruption of sin which came to us from the act of generation, so also He allows greater power over the actual genital organ, even to its removal.

And again, it was a greater thing to turn Lot's wife into a pillar of salt than it is to take away the male organ; and that (*Genesis xix*) was a real and actual, not an apparent, metamorphosis (for it is said that that pillar is still to be seen), And this was done by a bad Angel; just as the good Angels struck the men of Sodom with blindness, so that they could not find the door of the house. And so it was with the other punishments of the men of Gomorrah. The gloss, indeed, affirms that Lot's wife was herself tainted with that vice, and therefore she was punished.

And again, whoever can create a natural shape can also take it away. But devils have created many natural shapes, as is clear from Pharaoh's magicians, who with the help of devils made frogs and serpents. Also S. Augustine, in Book LXXXIII, says that those things which are visibly done by the lower powers of the air cannot be considered to be mere illusions; but even men are able, by some skilful incision, to remove the male organ; therefore devils can do invisibly what others do visibly.

But on the contrary side, S. Augustine (*de Ciuitate Dei*, XVIII) says: It is not to be believed that, through the art or power of devils, man's body can be changed into the likeness of a beast; therefore it is equally impossible that that should be removed which is essential to the truth of the human body, Also he says (*de Trinitate*, III): It must not be thought that this substance of visible matter is subject to the will of those fallen angels; for it is subject only to God.

*Answer.* There is no doubt that certain witches can do marvellous things with regard to male organs, for this agrees with what has been seen and heard by many, and with the general account

of what has been known concerning that member through the senses of sight and touch. And as to how this thing is possible, it is to be said that it can be done in two ways, either actually and in fact, as the first arguments have said, or through some prestige or glamour. But when it is performed by witches, it is only a matter of glamour; although it is no illusion in the opinion of the sufferer. For his imagination can really and actually believe that something is not present, since by none of his exterior sense, such as sight or touch, can he perceive that it is present.

From this it may be said that there is a true abstraction of the member in imagination, although not in fact; and several things are to be noted as to how this happens. And first as to two methods by which it can be done. It is no wonder that the devil can deceive the outer human senses, since, as has been treated of above, he can illude the inner senses, by bringing to actual perception ideas that are stored in the imagination. Moreover, he deceives men in their natural functions, causing that which is visible to be invisible to them, and that which is tangible to be intangible, and the audible inaudible, and so with the other senses. But such things are not true in actual fact, since they are caused through some defect introduced in the sense, such as the eyes or the ears, or the touch, by reason of which defect a man's judgement is deceived.

And we can illustrate this from certain natural phenomena. For sweet wine appears bitter on the tongue of the fevered, his taste being deceived not by the actual fact, but through his disease. So also in the case under consideration, the deception is not due to fact, since the member is still actually in its place; but it is an illusion of the sense with regard to it.

Again, as has been said above concerning the generative powers, the devil can obstruct that action by imposing some other body of the same colour and appearance, in such a way that some smoothly fashioned body in the colour of flesh is interposed between the sight and touch, and between the true body of the sufferer, so that it seems to him that he can see and feel nothing but a smooth body with its surface interrupted by no genital organ. See the sayings of S. Thomas (2 dist. 8. artic. 5) concerning glammers and illusions, and also in the second of the second, 91, and in his questions concerning Sin; where he frequently quotes that of S. Augustine in Book LXXXIII: This evil of the devil creeps in through all the sensual approaches; he gives himself to figures, he adapts himself to colours, he abides in sounds, he lurks in smells, he infuses himself into flavours.

Besides, it is to be considered that such an illusion of the sight and touch can be caused not only by the interposition of some smooth unmembered body, but also by the summoning to the fancy or imagination of certain forms and ideas latent in the mind, in such a way that a thing is imagined as being perceived then for the first time. For, as was shown in the preceding question, devils can by their own power change bodies locally; and just as the disposition or humour can be affected in this way, so can the natural functions. I speak of things which appear natural to the imagination or senses. For Aristotle in the *de Somno et Vigilia* says, assigning the cause of apparitions in dreams, that when an animal sleeps much blood flows to the inner consciousness, and thence come ideas or impressions derived from actual previous experiences stored in the mind. It has already been defined how thus certain appearance convey the impressions of new experiences. And since this can happen naturally, much more can the devil call to the imagination the appearance of a smooth body unprovided with the virile member, in such a way that the sense believe it to be an actual fact.

Secondly, some other methods are to be noted which are easier to understand and to explain. For, according to S. Isidore (*Etym.* VIII, 9), a glamour is nothing but a certain delusion of the senses, and especially of the eyes. And for this reason it is also called a prestige, from *prestringo*, since the sight of the eyes is so fettered that things seem to be other than they are. And [Alexander](#)



[of Hales](#), Part 2, says that a prestige, properly understood, is an illusion of the devil, which is not caused by any change in matter, but only exists in the mind of him who is deluded, either as to his inner or outer perceptions.

Wherefore, in a manner of speaking, we may say even of human prestidigitatory art, that it can be effected in three ways. For the first, it can be done without devils, since it is artificially done by the agility of men who show things and conceal them, as in the case of the tricks of conjurers and ventriloquists. The second method is also without the help of devils; as when men can use some natural virtue in natural bodies or minerals so as to impart to such objects some other appearance quite different from their true appearance. Wherefore, according to S. Thomas (I, 114, 4), and several others, men, by the smoke of certain smouldering or lighted herbs, can make rods appear to be serpents.

The third method of delusion is effected with the help of devils, the permission of God being granted. For it is clear that devils have, of their nature, some power over certain earthly matters, which they exercise upon them, when God permits, so that things appear to be other than they are.

And as to this third method, it is to be noted that the devil has fives ways in which he can delude anyone so that he thinks a thing to be other than it is. First, by an artificial tricks, as has been said; for that which a man can do by art, the devil can do even better. Second, by a natural method, by the application, as has been said, and interposition of some substance so as to hide the true body, or by confusing it in man's fancy. The third way is when in an assumed body he presents himself as being something which he is not; as witness the story which S. Gregory tells in his *First Dialogue* of a Nun, who ate a lettuce, which, however, as the devil confessed, was not a lettuce, but the devil in the form of a lettuce, or in the lettuce itself. Or as when he appeared to S. Antony in a lump of gold which he found in the desert. Or as when he touches a real man, and makes him appear like a brute animal, as will shortly be explained. The fourth method is when he confuses the organ of sight, so that a clear thing seems hazy, or the converse, or when an old woman appears to be a young girl. For even after weeping the light appears different from what it was before. His fifth method is by working in the imaginative power, and, by a disturbance of the humours, effecting a transmutation in the forms perceived by the senses, as has been treated of before, so that the senses then perceive as it were fresh and new images. And accordingly, by the last three of these methods, and even by the second, the devil can cast a glamour over the senses of a man. Wherefore there is no difficulty in his concealing the virile member by some prestige or glamour. And a manifest proof or example of this, which was revealed to us in our Inquisitorial capacity, will be set forth later, where more is recounted of these and other matters in the Second Part of this Treatise.

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*How a Bewitchment can be Distinguished from a Natural Defect.*

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An incidental question, with certain other difficulties, follows. Peter's member has been taken off, and he does not know whether it is by witchcraft or in some other way by the devil's power, with the permission of God. Are there any ways of determining or distinguishing between these? It can be answered as follows. First, that those to whom such things most commonly happen are adulterers or fornicators. For when they fail to respond to the demand of their mistress, or if they wish to desert them and attach themselves to other women, then their mistress, out of vengeance, through some other power causes their members to be taken off. Secondly, it can be distinguished by the fact that it is not permanent. For if it is not due to witchcraft, then the loss is not permanent, but it will be restored some time.

But here there arises another doubt, whether it is due to the nature of the witchcraft that it is not permanent. It is answered that it can be permanent, and last until death, just as the Canonists and Theologians judge concerning the impediment of witchcraft in matrimony, that the temporary can become permanent. For Godfrey says in his *Summa*: A bewitchment cannot always be removed by him who caused it, either because he is dead, or because he does not know how to remove it, or because the charm has been lost. Wherefore we may say in the same way that the charm which has been worked on Peter will be permanent if the witch who did it cannot heal him.

For there are three degrees of witches. For some both heal and harm; some harm, but cannot heal; and some seem able only to heal, that is, to take away injuries, as will be shown later. For thus it happened to us: Two witches were quarreling, and while they were taunting each other one said: I am not so wicked as you, for I know how to heal those whom I injure. The charm will also be permanent if, before it has been healed, the witch departs, either by changing her dwelling or by dying. For S. Thomas also says: Any charm may be permanent when it is such as can have no human remedy; or if it has a remedy, it is not known to men, or unlawful; although God can find a remedy through a holy Angel who can coerce the devil, if not the witch.

However, the chief remedy against witchcraft is the sacrament of Penitence. For bodily infirmity often proceeds from sin. And how the charms or witches can be removed will be shown in the Second Part of this Treatise, and in the Second Question, chapter VI, where other different matters are treated of and explained.

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*Solutions of the Arguments.*

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For the first, it is clear that there is no doubt but that, just as, with God's permission, they can kill men, so also can devils taken off that member, as well as others, truly and actually. But then the devils do not work through the medium of witches, concerning which mention has already been made. And from this the answer to the second argument is also made clear. But this is to be said: that God allows more power of witchcraft over the genital forces because, etc.; and therefore even allows that that member should be truly and actually taken off. But it is not valid to say that this always happens. For it would not be after the manner of witchcraft for it to happen so; and even the witches, when they do such works, do not pretend that they have not the power to restore the member when they wish to and know how to do so. From which it is clear that it is not actually taken off, but only by a glamour. As for the third, concerning the metamorphosis of Lot's wife, we say that this was actual, and not a glamour. And as to the fourth, that devils can create certain substantial shapes, and therefore can also remove them: it is to be said with regard to Pharaoh's magicians that they made true serpents; and that devils can, with the help of another agent, produce certain effects on imperfect creatures which they cannot on men, who are God's chief care. For it is said: Does God care for oxen? They can, nevertheless, with the permission of God, do to men true and actual harm, as also they can create a glamour of harm, and by this the answer to the last argument is made clear.

## Question X

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*“Alexander.” Alexander of Hales, the Franciscan theologian and philosopher, Doctor Irregragabilis, was one of the greatest of the scholastics. He was born at Hales, or Hailles, in Gloucestershire towards the end of the twelfth century, and died at Paris at the convent of his Order in 1245. His principal work is the “Summa Uniuersae Theologiae,” begun about the year 1231, and left unfinished. It has several times been published: Venice, 1475, 1576; Nuremburg, 1481, 1502; Pavia, 1481; Cologne, 1622. A critical edition, which is much needed, has been promised by the Quaracchi editors of the works of S. Bonaventura.*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION X.*

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*Whether Witches can by some Glamour Change Men into Beasts.*

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Here we declare the truth as to whether and how witches transform men into beasts. And it is argued that this is not possible, from the following passage of *Episcopus* (XXVI, 5): Whoever believes that it is possible for any creature to be changed for the better or for the worse, or to be transformed into any other shape or likeness, except by the Creator Himself, Who made all things, is without doubt an infidel, and worse than a pagan.

And we will quote the arguments of S. Thomas in the *2nd Book of Sentences*, VIII: Whether devils can affect the bodily sense by the delusion of a glamour. There he argues first that they cannot. For though that shape of a beast which is seen must be somewhere, it cannot exist only in the senses; for the sense perceive no shape that is not received from actual matter, and there is no actual beast there; and he adduces the authority of the Canon. And again, that which seems to be, cannot really be; as in the case of a woman who seems to be a beast, for two substantial shapes cannot exist at one and the same time in the same matter. Therefore, since that shape of a beast which appears cannot exist anywhere, no glamour or illusion can exist in the eye of the beholder; for the sight must have some object in which it terminates.

And if it is argued that the shape exists in the surrounding atmosphere, this is not possible; both because the atmosphere is not capable of taking any shape or form, and also because the air around that person is not always constant, and cannot be so on account of its fluid nature, especially when it is moved. And again because in that case such a transformation would be visible to everyone; but this is not so, because the devils seem to be unable to deceive the sight of Holy Men in the least.

Besides, the sense of sight, or the faculty of vision, is a passive faculty, and every passive faculty is set in motion by the active agent that corresponds to it. Now the active agent corresponding to sight is twofold: one is the origin of the act, or the object; the other is the carrier, or medium. But that apparent shape cannot be the object of the sense, neither can it be the medium through which it is carried. First, it cannot be the object, since it cannot be taken hold of by anything, as was shown in the foregoing argument, since it does not exist in the senses received from an object, neither is it in the actual object, nor even in the air, as in a carrying medium, as was treated of above in the third argument.

Besides, if the devil moves the inner consciousness, he does so either by projecting himself into the cognitive faculty, or by changing it. But he does not do so by projecting himself; for he would either have to assume a body, and even so could not penetrate into the inner organ of imagination; for two bodies cannot be at the same time in the same place; or he would assume a phantasmal body; and this again would be impossible, since no phantasm is quite without substance.

Similarly also he cannot do it by changing the cognition. For he would either change it by alteration, which he does not seem able to do, since all alteration is caused by active qualities, in which the devils are lacking; or he would change it by transformation or local motion; and this does not seem feasible for two reasons. First, because a transformation or an organ cannot be effect without a sense of pain. Secondly, because in this case the devil would only make things of a known shape appear; but S. Augustine says that he creates shapes of this sort, both known and unknown. Therefore it seems that the devils can in no way deceive the imagination or senses of a man.

*But against this*, S. Augustine says (*de Ciuitate Dei*, XVIII) that the transmutations of men into brute animals, said to be done by the art of devils, are not actual but only apparent. But this would not be possible if devils were not able to transmute the human senses. The authority of S. Augustine is again to the point in Book LXXXIII, which has already been quoted: This evil of the devil creeps in through all the sensual approaches, etc.

*Answer.* If the reader wishes to refer to the method of transmutation, he will find in the Second Part of this work, chapter VI, various methods. But proceeding for the present in a scholastic manner, let us say in agreement with the opinions of the three Doctors, that the devil can deceive the human fancy so that a man really seems to be an animal. The last of those opinions, which is that of S. Thomas, is more subtle than the rest. But the first is that of [S. Antoninus](#) in the first part of his *Summa*, V, 5, where he declares that the devil at times works to deceive a man's fancy, especially by an illusion of the senses; and he proves this by natural reasoning, by the authority of the Canon, and by a great number of examples.

And at first as follows: Our bodies naturally are subject to and obey the angelic nature as regards local motion. But the bad angels, although they have lost grace, have not lost their natural power, as has often been said before. And since the faculty of fancy or imagination is corporeal, that is, allied to a physical organ, it also is naturally subject to devils, so that they can transmute it, causing various phantasies, by the flow of the thoughts and perceptions to the original image received by them. So says S. Antoninus, and adds that it is proved by the following Canon (*Episcopus*, XXVI, 5): It must not be omitted that certain wicked women, perverted by Satan and seduced by the illusions and phantasms of devils, believe and profess that they ride in the night hours on certain beasts with Diana, the heathen goddess, or with Herodias, and with a countless number of women, and that in the untimely silence of night they travel over great distances of land. And later: Wherefore priests ought to preach to the people of God that they should know this to be altogether false, and that when such phantasms afflict the minds of the faithful, it is not of God, but of an evil spirit. For Satan himself transforms himself into the shape and likeness of different persons, and in dreams deluding the mind which he holds captive, leads it through devious ways.

Indeed the meaning of this Canon has been treated of in the First Question, as to the four things which are to be preached. But it would be to misunderstand its meaning to maintain that witches cannot be so transported, when they wish and God does not prevent it; for very often men who are not witches are unwillingly transported bodily over great distances of land.

But that these transmutations can be effected in both ways will be shown by the aforesaid *Summa*, and in the chapter where S. Augustine relates that it is read in the books of the Gentiles that a certain sorceress named Circe changed the companions of Ulysses into beasts; but that this was due to some glamour or illusion, rather than an actual accomplishment, by altering the fancies of men; and this is clearly proved by several examples.

For we read in the *Lives of the Fathers*, that a certain girl would not consent to a young man who was begging her to commit a shameful act with him. And the young man, being angry because of this, caused a certain Jew to work a charm against her, by which she was changed into a filly. But this metamorphosis was not an actual fact, but an illusion of the devil, who changed the fancy and sense of the girl herself, and of those who looked at her, so that she seemed to be a filly, who was really a girl. For when she was led to the Blessed Macarius, the devil could not so work as to deceive his senses as he had those of other people, on account of his sanctity; for to him she seemed a true girl, not a filly. And at length by his prayer she was set free from that illusion, and it is said that this had happened to her because she did not give her mind to holy things, or attend the Sacraments as she ought; therefore the devil had power over her, although she was in other respects honest.

Therefore the devil can, by moving the inner perceptions and humours, effect changes in the actions and faculties, physical, mental, and emotional, working by means of any physical organ soever; and this accords with S. Thomas, I, 91. And of this sort we may believe to have been the acts of Simon Magus in the incantations which are narrated of him. But the devil can do none of these things without the permission of God, Who with His good Angels often restrains the wickedness of him who seeks to deceive and hurt us. Wherefore S. Augustine, speaking of witches, says: These are they who, with the permission of God, stir up the elements, and confuse the minds of those who do not trust in God (XXVI, 5).

Also devils can by witchcraft cause a man to be unable to see his wife rightly, and the converse. And this comes from an affectation of the fancy, so that she is represented to him as an odious and horrible thing. The devil also suggests representations of loathsome things to the fancy of both the waking and the sleeping, to deceive them and lead them to sin. But because sin does not consist in the imagination but in the will, therefore man does not sin in these fancies suggested by the devil, and these various transformations, unless of his own will he consents to sin.

The second opinion of the modern Doctors is to the same effect, when they declare what is glamour, and how many ways the devil can cause such illusions. Here we refer to what has already been said concerning the arguments of S. Antoninus, which there is no need to repeat.

The third opinion is that of S. Thomas, and is an answer to the argument where it is asked, Wherein lies the existence of the shape of a beast that is seen; in the senses, or in reality, or in the surrounding air? And his opinion is that the apparent shape of a beast only exists in the inner perception, which, through the force of imagination, sees it in some way as an exterior object. And the devil has two ways of effecting such a result.

In one way we may say that the forms of animals which are conserved in the treasury of the imagination pass by the operation of the devil into the organs of inner senses; and in this way it happens in dreams, as has been declared above. And so, when these forms are impressed on the organs of the outer senses, such as sight, they appear as if they were present as outer objects, and could actually be touched.

The other way results from a change in the inner organs of perception, through which the judgement is deceived; as is shown in the case of him who has his taste corrupted, so that everything sweet seems bitter; and this is not very different from the first method. Moreover, even men can accomplish this by the virtue of certain natural things, as when in the vapour of a certain smoke the beams of a house appear to be serpents; and many other instances of this are found, as had been mentioned above.

As to the first argument, that text is often quoted, but it is badly understood. For as to where it speaks of transformation into another shape or likeness, it has been made clear how this can be done by prestidigitatory art. And as to where it says that no creature can be made by the power of the devil, this is manifestly true if Made is understood to mean Created. But if the word Made is taken to refer to natural production, it is certain that devils can make some imperfect creatures. And S. Thomas shows how this may be done. For he says that all transmutations of bodily matters which can be effected by the forces of nature, in which the essential thing is the semen which is found in the elements of this world, on land or in the waters (as serpents and frogs and such things deposit their semen), can be effected by the work of devils who have acquired such semen. So also it is when anything is changed into serpents or frogs, which can be generated by putrefaction.

But those transmutations of bodily matters which cannot be effected by the forces of nature can in no way be truly effected by the work of the devils. For when the body of a man is changed into the body of a beast, or a dead body is brought to life, such things only seem to happen, and are a glamour or illusion; or else the devil appears before men in an assumed body.

These arguments are substantiated. For Blessed Albertus in his book *On Animals*, where he examines whether devils, or let us even say witches, can really make animals, says that they can, with God's permission, make imperfect animals. But they cannot do so in an instant, as God does, but by means of some motion, however sudden, as is clear in the case of witches. And touching the passage in *Exodus* vii, where Pharaoh called his wise men, he says: The devils run throughout the world and collect various germs, and by using them can evolve various species. And the gloss thereon says: When witches attempt to effect anything by the invocation of devils, they run about the world and bring the semen of those things which are in question, and by its means, with the permission of God, they produce new species. But this has been spoken of above.

Another difficulty may arise, whether such devils' works are to be deemed miraculous. The answer was made clear in the preceding arguments, that even the devils can perform certain miracles to which their natural powers are adapted. And although such things are true in fact, they are not done with a view to the knowledge of the truth; and in this sense the works of Antichrist may be said to be deceptions, since they are done with a view to the seduction of men.

The answer to the other argument, that concerning the shape, is also clear. The shape of a beast which is seen does not exist in the air, but only in the perception of the senses, as has been demonstrated above from the opinion of S. Thomas.

For the argument that every passive is set in motion by its corresponding active, this is granted. But when it is inferred that the shape which is seen cannot be the original object which sets in motion the act of sight, since it arises from none of the sense, it is answered that it does not arise, since it originates from some sensible image conserved in the imagination, which the devil can draw out and present to the imagination or power of perception, as has been said above.

For the last argument, it is to be said that the devil does not, as has been shown, change the perceptive and imaginative powers by projecting himself into them, but by transmuting them; not indeed by altering them, except in respect of local motion. For he cannot of himself induce new appearances, as has been said. But he changes them by transmutation, that is, local motion. And this again he does, not by dividing the substance of the organ of perception, since that would result in a sense of pain, but by a movement of the perceptions and humours.



## [Question X Continued . . . .](#)

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*“S. Antoninus.” The famous Dominican Archbishop of Florence, born at Florence, 1 March, 1389; died 2 May, 1459. His feast day is 10 May. His chief literary work is the “Summa Theologica Moralis, partibus IV distincta,” written shortly before his death, and marking a very considerable development in moral theology. Crohns in his “Die Summa theologica des Antonin von Florenz und die Schützung des Weibes im Hexenhammer,” Helsingfors, 1903, has set out to show that the very pronounced misogyny which is apparent in the “Malleus Maleficarum” can be traced to the “Summa” of S. Antoninus. But Paulus, “Die Verachtung der Frau beim hl. Antonin,” in “Historisch-Politische Blätter,” 1904, pp. 812-30, has severely criticized this thesis, which he declares to be untenable.*

*Within fifty years after the first appearance of the “Summa” of S. Antoninus, fifteen editions were printed at various important centres of learning. Many other editions followed, and in 1740 it was issued at Verona in four volumes, folio, edited by P. Ballerini; in 1741 at Florence by two Dominicans, Mamachi and Remedelli.*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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*PART I.*  
*QUESTION X. CONTINUED . . .*

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But it may be further objected as follows: that according to this the devil cannot present to a man the appearance of anything new in respect of things seen. It is to be said that a new thing can be understood in two ways. In one way it may be entirely new both in itself and its beginnings; and in this sense the devil cannot present anything new to a man's sense of vision: for he cannot cause one who is born blind to imagine colours, or a deaf man to imagine sounds. In another sense, a thing may be new as to the composition of its whole; as we may say that it is an imaginatively new thing if a man imagines that he sees a mountain of gold, which he never saw; for he has seen gold, and he has seen a mountain, and can by some natural operation imagine the phantasm of a mountain of gold. And in this way the devil can present a new thing to the imagination.

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*What is to be Thought of Wolves which sometimes Seize and Eat Men and Children out of their Cradles: whether this also is a Glamour caused by Witches.*

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There is incidentally a question concerning wolves, which sometimes snatch men and children out of their houses and eat them, and run about with such astuteness that by no skill or strength can they be hurt or captured. It is to be said that this sometimes has a natural cause, but is sometimes due to a glamour, when it is effected by witches. And as to the first, Blessed Albertus in his book *On Animals* says that it can arise from five causes. Sometimes on account of great famine, when stags and other beasts have come near to men. Sometimes on account of the fierceness of their strength, as in the case of dogs in cold regions. But this is nothing to the point; and we say that such things are caused by an illusion of devils, when God punishes some nation for sin. See *Leviticus* xxvi: If ye do not my commandments, I will send the beasts of the field against you, who shall consume you and your flocks. And again *Deuteronomy* xxxii: I will also send the teeth of beast upon them, etc.

As to the question whether they are true wolves, or devils appearing in that shape, we say that they are true wolves, but are possessed by devils; and they are so roused up in two ways. It may happen without the operation of witches: and so it was in the case of the two-and-forty boys who were devoured by two bears coming out of the woods, because they mocked the prophet Elia, saying, Go up, thou bald head, etc. Also in the case of the lion which slew the prophet who would not perform the commandment of God (III. *Kings* xiii). And it is told that a Bishop of Vienna ordered the minor Litanies to be solemnly chanted on certain days before the Feast of the Ascension, because wolves were entering the city and publicly devouring men.

But in another way it may be an illusion caused by witches. For William of Paris tells of a certain man who thought that he was turned into [a wolf](#), and at certain times went hiding among the caves. For there he went at a certain time, and though he remained there all the time stationary, he believed that he was a wolf which went about devouring children; and though the devil, having possessed a wolf, was really doing this, he erroneously thought that he was prowling about in his

sleep. And he was for so long thus out of his senses that he was at last found lying in the wood raving. The devil delights in such things, and caused the illusion of the pagans who believed that men and old women were changed into beasts. From this it is seen that such things only happen by the permission of God along and through the operation of devils, and not through any natural defect; since by no art or strength can such wolves be injured or captured. In this connexion also Vincent of Beauvais (*in Spec. Hist.*, VI, 40) tells that in Gaul, before the Incarnation of Christ, and before the Punic War, a wolf snatched a sentry's sword out of its sheath.

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## [Question XI](#)

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*“A wolf.” There are two kinds of werewolves, voluntary and involuntary. The voluntary were, of course, wizards, such as Gilles Garnier, who on 18 January, 1573, was condemned by the court of Dôle, Lyons, to be burned alive for “the abominable crimes of lycanthropy and witchcraft.” More than fifty witnesses deposed that he had attacked and killed children in the fields and vineyards, devouring their raw flesh. He was sometimes seen in human shape, sometimes as a “loup-garou.” During the sixteenth century in France lycanthropy was very prevalent, and cannibalism were rife in many county districts.*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION XI.*

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*That Witches who are Midwives in Various Ways Kill the Child Conceived in the Womb, and Procure an Abortion; or if they do not this Offer New-born Children to Devils.*

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Here is set forth the truth concerning four horrible crimes which devils commit against infants, both in the mother's womb and afterwards. And since the devils do these things through the medium of women, and not men, this form of homicide is associated rather with women than with men, And the following are the methods by which it is done.

The Canonists treat more fully than the Theologians of the obstructions due to witchcraft; and they say that is is witchcraft, not only when anyone is unable to perform the carnal act, of which we have spoken above; but also when a woman is prevented from conceiving, or is made to miscarry after she has conceived. A third and fourth method of witchcraft is when they have failed to procure an abortion, and then either devour the child or offer it to a devil.

There is no doubt concerning the first two methods, since, without the help of devils, a man can by natural means, such as herbs, savin for example, or other emmenagogues, procure that a woman cannot generate or conceive, as has been mentioned above. But with the other two methods it is different; for they are effected by witches. And there is no need to bring forward the arguments, since very evident instances and examples will more readily show the truth of this matter.

The former of these two abominations is the fact that certain witches, against the instinct of human nature, and indeed against the nature of all beasts, with the possible exception of wolves, are in the habit of devouring and eating infant children. And concerning this, the Inquisitor of Como, who has been mentioned before, has told us the following: that he was summoned by the inhabitants of the County of Barby to hold an inquisition, because a certain man had missed his child from its cradle, and finding a congress of women in the night-time, swore that he saw them kill his child and drink its blood and devour it. Also, in one single year, which is the year now last passed, he says that forty-one witches were burned, certain others taking flight to the Lord Archduke of Austria, Sigismund. For confirmation of this there are certain writings of [John Nider](#) in his *Formicarius*, of whom, as of those events which he recounts, the memory is still fresh in men's minds; wherefore it is apparent that such things are not incredible. We must add that in all these matters witch midwives cause yet greater injuries, as penitent witches have often told to us and to others, saying: No one does more harm to the Catholic Faith than midwives. For when they do not kill children, then, as if for some other purpose, they take them out of the room and, raising them up in the air, offer them to devils. But the method which they observe in crimes of this sort will be shown in the Second Part, which we must soon approach. But first one more question must be inquired into, namely, that of the Divine permission. For it was said at the beginning that three things are necessary for the effecting of witchcraft: the devil, a witch, and the Divine permission.

## Question XII

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*“Nider.” John Nider, O.P., was born 1380 in Swabia; and died at Colmar, 13 August, 1438. He gained a wide reputation as a preacher and was active at the Council of Constance. An advocate of the strictest reforms, he became eminent in the annals of his Order by his energy and example. The most important among his many works is the “Formicarius,” a treatise upon the theological, philosophical, and social questions of the day. A complete edition was published at Douai, 5 vols., 1602. The tractate “De Maleficus” has often been printed separately.*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION XII.*

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*Whether the Permission of Almighty God is an Accompaniment of Witchcraft.*

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Now we must consider the Divine permission itself, touching which four things are asked. First, whether it is necessary that this permission should accompany a work of witchcraft. Secondly, that God in His justice permits a creature naturally sinful to perpetrate witchcraft and other horrid crimes, the other two necessary concomitants being presupposed. Thirdly, that the crime of witchcraft exceeds all other evils which God permits to be done. Fourthly, in what way this matter should be preached to the people.

Concerning the third postulate of this First Part, namely, the Divine permission, it is asked: Whether it is as Catholic to affirm the Divine permission in these works of witches, as it is quite heretical to contradict such an affirmation? And it is argued that it is not heretical to maintain that God does not permit so great power to the devil in this sort of witchcraft. For it is Catholic, and not heretical, to refute such things as appear to be to the disparagement of the Creator. And it is submitted that it is Catholic to maintain that the devil is not allowed such power of injuring men, since to hold the opposite opinion seems to be a disparagement of the Creator. For it would then follow that not everything is subject to the Divine providence, since the all-wise Provider keeps away, as far as possible, all defect and evil from those for whom He cares. And if the works of witchcraft are permitted by God, they are not kept away by Him: and if He does not keep them away, the God Himself is not a wise Provider, and all things are not subject to His providence. But since this is false, therefore it is false that God permits witchcraft.

And again, to permit a thing to happen presupposes in him who permits it that either he can prevent it from happening if he wishes, or he cannot prevent it even if he wishes; and neither of these suppositions can apply to God. For in the first case, such a man would be thought spiteful, and in the second case impotent. Then it is incidentally asked: As to that bewitchment that happened to Peter, if God could have prevented it, and did not do so, then God is either spiteful or He does not care for all; but if He could not have prevented it even if He wished, the He is not omnipotent. But since it is not possible to maintain the opinion that God does not care for all, and the rest, therefore it cannot be said that witchcraft is done with the permission of God.

Besides, he who is responsible to himself and is the master of his own actions is not subject to the permission or providence of any governor. But men were made responsible to themselves by God, according to *Ecclesiasticus xv*: God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his counsel. In particular, the sins which men do are left in their own counsel, according to their hearts' desire. Therefore not all evils are subject to Divine permission.

Yet again, S. Augustine says in the *Enchiridion*, as does also Aristotle in the ninth book of *Metaphysics*: It is better not to know certain vile things than to know them, but all that is good is to be ascribed to God. Therefore God does not prevent the very vile works of witchcraft, whether He

permits or not. See also S. Paul in I. *Corinthians* ix: Doth God take care of oxen? And the same holds good of the other irrational beasts. Wherefore God takes no care whether they are bewitched or not, since they are not subject to His permission, which proceeds from His providence.

Again, that which happens of necessity has no need of provident permission or prudence. This is clearly shown in Aristotle's *Ethics*, Book II: Prudence is a right reasoning concerning things which happen and are subject to counsel and choice. But several effects of witchcraft happen of necessity; as when for some reason, or owing to the influence of stars, diseases come, or any other things which we judge to be witchcraft. Therefore they are not always subject to Divine permission.

And again, if men are bewitched by Divine permission, then it is asked: Why does this happen to one more than to another? If it be said that it is because of sin, which abounds more in one than in another, this does not seem valid; for then the greater sinners would be the more bewitched, but this is manifestly not so, since they are less punished in this world. As it is said: Well is it for the liars. But, if this argument were good, they also would be bewitched. Finally, it is clear from the fact that innocent children and other just men suffer most from witchcraft.

But against these arguments: it is submitted that God permits evil to be done, though He does not wish it; and this is for the perfecting of the universe. See Dionysius, *de Divin. Nom.* III: Evil will be for all time, even to the perfecting of the universe. And S. Augustine in the *Enchiridion*: In all things good and evil consists the admirable beauty of the universe. So that what is said to be evil is well ordained, and kept in its due place commends more highly that which is good; for good things are more pleasing and laudable when compared with bad. S. Thomas also refutes the opinion of those who say that, although God has no wish for evil (since no creature seeks for evil, either in its natural, or its animal, or in its intellectual appetite, which is the will, whose object is good), yet He is willing that evil should exist and be done. This he says to be false; since God neither wishes evil to be done, nor wishes it not to be done, but is willing to allow evil to be done; and this is good for the perfecting of the universe.

And why it is erroneous to say that God wishes evil to be and to be done, for the good of the universe, he says is for the following reason. Nothing is to be judged good except what is good in itself and not by accident. As the virtuous man is judge good in his intellectual nature, not in his animal nature. But evil is not of itself ordained for good, but by accident. For against the intention of those who do evil, good results. In this way, against the intention of witches, or against the intention of tyrants, was it that through their persecutions the patience of the martyrs shone out clearly.

*Answer.* This question is as difficult to understand as it is profitable to elucidate. For there is among the arguments, not so much of Laymen as of certain Wise men, this in common; that they do not believe that such horrible witchcraft as had been spoken of is permitted by God; being ignorant of the causes of this Divine permission. And by reason of this ignorance, since witches are not put down with the vengeance that is due to them, they seem now to be depopulating the whole of Christianity. Therefore that both learned and unlearned may be satisfied in each way, according to the opinion of the Theologians, we make our answer by the discussion of two difficulties. And first, that the world is so subject to the Divine providence that He Himself provides for all. Secondly, that in His justice He permits the prevalence of sin, which consists of guilt, punishment, and loss, by reason of His two first permissions, namely, the fall of the Angels and that of our first parents. From which also it will be clear that obstinately to disbelieve this smacks of heresy, since such a man implicates himself in the errors of the infidels.

And as for the first, it is to be noted that, presupposing that which pertains to the providence

of God (see *Wisdom* xiv: Thy providence, O Father, governeth all things), we ought also to maintain that all things are subject to His providence, and that also He immediately provides for all things. And to make this clear, let us first refute a certain contrary error. For taking the text in *Job* xxii: Thick clouds are a covering to him that He seeth not us; and He walketh in the circuit of heaven: some have thought that the doctrine of S. Thomas, I, 22, means that only incorruptible things are subject to Divine providence, such as the separate Essences, and the stars, with also the species of lower things, which are also incorruptible; but they said that the individuals of the species, being corruptible, were not so subject. Wherefore they said that all lower things which are in the world are subject to Divine providence in the universal, but not in the particular or individual sense. But to others this opinion did not seem tenable, since God cares for the other animals just as He does for men. Therefore the Rabbi Moses, wishing to hold a middle course, agreed with their opinion in saying that all corruptible things are not individually entirely subject to Divine governance, but only in a universal sense, as has been said before; but he excepted men from the generality of corruptible things, because of the splendid nature of their intellect, which is comparable with the of the separate Essences. And so, according to his opinion, whatever witchcraft happens to men comes from the Divine permission; but not such as happens to the animals or to the other fruits of the earth.

Now though this opinion is nearer to the truth than that which altogether denies the providence of God in worldly matters, maintaining that the world was made by chance, as did Democritus and the Epicureans, yet it is not without great fallacy. For it must be said that everything is subject to Divine providence, not only in the general, but also in the particular sense; and that the bewitching not only of men, but also of animals and the fruits of the earth, comes from Divine and provident permission. And this is plainly true; the providence and ordinance of things to some end extend just so far as the causality of them itself extends. To take an example from things that are subject to some master; they are so far subject to his providence as they are themselves under his control. But the causality which is of God is the original agent, and extends itself to all beings, not only in a general but also in an individual sense, and not only to things incorruptible. Therefore, since all things must be of God, so all things are cared for by Him, that is, are ordained to some end.

This point is touched by S. Paul in *Romans* xiii: All things which are from God were ordained by Him. Which is to say that, just as all things come from God, so also are all things ordained by Him, and are consequently subject to His providence. For the providence of God is to be understood as nothing else than the reason, that is, the cause of the ordering of things to a purpose. Therefore, in so far as all things are a part of one purpose, so also are they subject to the providence of God. And God knows all things, not only in the mass generally, but also in the individual particularly. Now the knowledge which God has of things created is to be compared with a craftsman's knowledge of his work: therefore, just as all his work is subject to the order and providence of a craftsman, so are all things subject to the order and providence of God.

But this does not provide a satisfactory explanation of the fact that God in justice permits evil and witchcraft to be in the world, although He is Himself the provider and governor of all things; for it would seem that, if this is conceded, He ought to keep away all evil from those for whom He cares. For we see among men that a wise provider does all that he can to keep away all defect and harm from those who are his care; therefore why does not God, in the same way, keep away all evil? It must be noted that a particular and an universal controller or provider are two very different matters. For the particular controller must of necessity keep away all the harm he can, since he is not able to extract good out of evil. But God is the universal controller of the whole

world, and can extract much good from particular evils; as through the persecution of the tyrants came the patience of the martyrs, and through the works of witches come the purgation or proving of the faith of the just, as will be shown. Therefore it is not God's purpose to prevent all evil, lest the universe should lack the cause of much good. Wherefore S. Augustine says in the *Enchiridion*: So merciful is Almighty God, that He would not allow any evil to be in His works unless He were so omnipotent and good that He can bring good even out of evil.

And we have an example of this in the actions of natural things. For although the corruptions and defects which occur in natural things are contrary to the purpose of that particular thing (as when a thief is hanged, or when animals are killed for human food), they are yet in accordance with the universal purpose of nature (as that man's life and property should be kept intact); and thus the universal good is preserved. For it is necessary for the conservation of the species that the death of one should be the preservation of another. For lions are kept alive by the slaughter of other animals.

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[Question XII Continued . . . .](#)

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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*PART I.*  
*QUESTION XII. CONTINUED . . . .*

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*It is explained with regard to the Divine Permission,  
that God would not make a Creature to be [Naturally without Sin](#).*

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Secondly, God in His justice permits the prevalence of evil, both that of sin and that of pain, and especially now that the world is cooling and declining to its end; and this we shall prove from two propositions which must be postulated. First, that God would not - or let us rather say, with the fear of God, that (humanly speaking) it is impossible that any creature, man or Angel, can be of such a nature that it cannot sin. And secondly, that it is just in God to permit man to sin, or to be tempted. These two propositions being granted, and since it is a part of the Divine providence that every creature shall be left to its own nature, it must be said that, according to the premises, it is impossible that God does not permit witchcraft to be committed with the help of devils.

And that it was not possible to communicate to a creature a natural incapacity for sin, is shown by S. Thomas (II, 23, art. 1). For if this quality were communicable to any creature, God would have communicated it; for He has, at least in kind, communicated all other graces and perfections to His creatures that are communicable. Such is the personal union of two natures in Christ, the Maternity and Virginity of Immaculate MARY, the blessed companionship of the elect, and many other things. But we read that this quality was not given to any creature, either man or Angel; for it is said: Even in His Angels He found sin. Therefore it is certain that God will not communicate to man a natural incapacity for sin, although man may win to this through grace.

Again, if this were communicable, and were not communicated, the universe would not be perfect. And its perfections consists in the fact that all communicable good qualities of creatures are communicated in kind.

Neither is it valid to argue that God, being omnipotent, and having made men and Angels in His likeness, could also have caused his creatures to be by nature impeccable: or even that He would make that condition of Grace, which is the cause of confirmation in goodness, an essential part of the nature of Angels and men, so that through their natural origin and natural condition they would be so confirmed in goodness that they would not be able to sin.

For the first argument will not hold. Since, although God is all-powerful and all-good, yet he will not bestow this quality of impeccability; not because of any imperfection in His power, but because of the imperfection of the creature; and this imperfection lies chiefly in the fact that no creature, man or Angel, is capable of receiving this quality. And for this reason: that, being a creature, its being depends upon its Creator, just as an effect depends on the cause of its being. And to create is to make something out of nothing, and this, if left to itself, perishes, but endures so long as it preserves the influence of its cause. You may take, if you wish, an example from a candle, which burns only so long as it has wax. This being so, it is to be noted that God created man, and left him in the hand of his own counsel (*Ecclesiasticus* xvii). And so also He created the

Angels in the beginning of Creation. And this was done for the sake of Free-will, the property of which is to do or to omit doing, to recede or not to recede from its cause. And since to recede from God, from free-will, is to sin, therefore it was impossible for man or Angel to receive, and God did not will to give, such a natural quality that he should at the same time be endowed with free-will and also be incapable of sin.

Another imperfection by reason of which this quality cannot be communicated to man or Angel is that it implies a contradiction; and since a contradiction is by its nature impossible, we say that God will not do this thing. Or rather we should say that His creatures cannot receive such a quality. For example, it is impossible that anything can be at one and the same time alive and dead. And so it would imply this contradiction: that a man should have free-will, by which he would be able to depart from his Creator, and that he should also be unable to sin. But if he were unable to sin, he would be unable to depart from his Creator. For this is sin: to despise the incommutable good and cleave to things that are variable. But to despise or not to despise is a matter of free-will.

The second argument also is not valid. For if the confirmation of grace were so essential a part of the original creation that it became a natural quality of the creature to be unable to sin, then his inability to sin would arise, not from any exterior cause or from grace, but from his own very nature; and then he would be God, which is absurd. S. Thomas treats of this in his above solution of the last argument, when he says that whenever there happens to any creature something that can only be caused by a superior influence, the lower nature cannot itself cause that effect without the co-operation of the higher nature. For example, a gas becomes ignited by fire; but it could not of its own nature light itself without fire.

I say, therefore, that since the confirmation of a rational creature comes only through grace, which is a sort of spiritual light or image of the light of Creation, it is impossible for any creature to have, of its own nature, that confirmation of grace, unless it be made one with the Divine nature; that is, unless it be of the same nature as God, which is altogether impossible. Let us conclude by saying that the inability to sin belongs by nature to God alone. For He does not depart from His nature, Who gives to all things their being, neither can He depart from the righteousness of His goodness; for this belongs to Him through the character of His nature. But for all others who have this quality that they cannot sin, it is conferred upon them through the confirmation in goodness by grace; by which the sons of God are made free from sin, and they who in any way consort with the Divine nature.

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## [Question XIII](#)

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*“Naturally without sin.” The theology here is very intricate and must be followed with the utmost caution. All have free-will, and therefore might sin. But Our Lord and Our Lady did not sin; and the thought that they might have sinned is blasphemy. And S. John says (I. iii. 9): “Whosoever is born of God, committeth not sin: for his seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION XIII.*

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*Herein is set forth the Question, concerning the Two Divine Permissions which God justly allows, namely, that the Devil, the Author or all Evil, should Sin, and that our First Parents should Fall, from which Origins the Works of Witches are justly suffered to take place.*

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The second question and proposition is that God justly permitted certain Angels to sin in deed, which He could not have allowed unless they were capable of sin; and that in like manner He preserved certain creatures through grace, without their having previously suffered temptation; and that He justly allows man both to be tempted and to sin. And all this is clearly shown as follows. For it is a part of Divine providence that each single thing should be left to its own nature, and not be altogether impeded in its natural works. For, as Dionysius says (*de Divin. Nom.*, IV), Providence is not a destroyer, but a preserver of nature. This being so, it is manifest that, just as the good of the race is better than the good of the individual (Aristotle, *Ethics*, I), so also the good of the universe takes precedence over the good of any particular creature. Therefore we must add that, if men were prevented from sinning, many steps to perfection would be removed. For that nature would be removed which has it in its power to sin or not to sin; but it has already been shown that this is a natural property of man's nature.

And let it be answered that, if there had been no sin, but immediate confirmation, then there would never have appeared what debt of grace in good works is due to God, and what the power of sin has been able to effect, and many other things without which the universe would suffer great loss. For it behoved that Satan should sin, not through some outside suggestion, but that he should find in himself the occasion of sin. And this he did when he wished to be equal to God. Now this is to be understood neither simply and directly, nor indirectly, but only with a reservation; and this is declared according to the authority of *Esaias* xiv: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. For it must not be understood simply and directly, because in that case he would have had a limited and erring understanding, in seeking something which was impossible for him. For he knew that he was a creature created by God, and therefore he knew that it was impossible for him to become equal to his Creator. Neither, again, must it be understood indirectly; for since the whole transparence of the air consists in its subjection to the sun's rays; therefore nothing which would be contrary to the good of its nature could be sought for by an Angel. But he sought for equality with God, not absolutely, but with a reservation, which was as follows. The nature of God has two qualities, that of blessedness and goodness, and the fact that all the blessedness and goodness of His creatures issues from Him. Therefore the Angel, seeing that the dignity of his own nature transcended that of the other creatures, wished and asked that the blessedness and goodness of all the inferior creatures should be derived from him. And he sought this in his own natural capacity, that just as he was the first to be endowed in nature with those qualities, so the other creatures should receive them from the nobility of his nature. And he sought



this of God, in perfect willingness to remain subject to God so long as he had that power granted to him. Therefore he did not wish to be made equal with God absolutely, but only with a reservation.

It is further to be noted that, wishing to bring his desire to the point of action, he suddenly made it known to others; and the understanding of the other Angels of his desire, and their perverse consenting to it, was also sudden. Therefore the sin of the First Angel exceeded and preceded the sins of the others in respect of the magnitude of his guilt and causality, but not in respect of duration. See *Apocalypse* xii. The dragon falling from heaven drew with him the third part of the stars. And he lives in the form of Leviathan, and is king over all the children or pride. And, according to Aristotle (*Metaph.*, V), he is called king of princes, inasmuch as he moves those who are subject to him according to his will and command. Therefore his sin was the occasion of sin in others, since he first, not having been tempted from outside, was the external temptation of others.

And that all these things happened instantaneously may be exemplified by physical things; for the ignition of a gas, the sight of the flame, and the impression formed by that sight all happen at one and the same time.

I have put this matter at some length; for in the consideration of that stupendous Divine permission in the case of the most noble creatures with regard to the one sin of ambition, it will be easier to admit particular permissions in the case of the works of witches, which are in some certain circumstances even greater sins. For in certain circumstances the sins of witches are greater than that of the Angel or of our first parents, as will be shown in the Second Part.

Now the fact that the providence of God permitted the first man to be tempted and to sin is sufficiently clear from what has been said concerning the transgression of the Angels. For both man and the Angel were created to the same end, and left with free-will, in order that they might receive the reward of blessedness not without merit. Therefore, just as the Angel was not preserved from his fall, in order that the power of sin on the one side and the power of the confirmation of grace on the other side might work together for the glory of the universe, so also ought it to be considered in the case of man.

Wherefore S. Thomas (II, 23, art. 2) says: That by which God is glorified ought not to be hindered from within. But God is glorified in sin, when He pardons in mercy and when He punishes in justice; therefore it behoves Him not to hinder sin. Let us, then, return to a brief recapitulation of our proposition, namely, that by the just providence of God man is permitted to sin for many reasons. First, that the power of God may be shown, Who alone is unchanging while every creature is variable. Secondly, that the wisdom of God may be declared, Who can bring good out of evil, which could not be unless God had allowed the creature to sin. Thirdly, that the mercy of God may be made manifest, by which Christ through His death liberated man who was lost. Fourthly, that the justice of God may be shown, which not only rewards the good, but also punishes the wicked. Fifthly, that the condition of man may not be worse than that of other creatures, all of whom God so governs that He allows them to act after their own nature; wherefore it behoved Him to leave man to his own judgement. Sixthly, for the glory of men; that is, the glory of the just man who could transgress but has not. And seventhly, for the adorning of the universe; for as there is a threefold evil in sin, namely, guilty, pain, and loss, so is the universe adorned by the corresponding threefold good, namely, righteousness, pleasure, and usefulness. For righteousness is adorned by guilt, pleasure by pain, and all usefulness by loss. And by this the answer to the arguments is made plain.

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According to the first argument it is heretical to maintain that the devil is allowed power to injure men. But the opposite appears rather to be true; for it is heretical to assert that God does not permit man, of his own free-will, to sin when he wishes. And God permits much sin, by reason of His power to hurt men in the punishment of the wicked for the adorning of the universe. For it is said by S. Augustine in his *Book of Soliloques*: Thou, Lord, hast commanded, and it is so, that the shame of guilt should never be without the glory of punishment.

And that is not a valid proof of the argument which is taken from the wise ruler who keeps away all defect and evil as far as he can. For it is quite different with God, Who has an universal care, from one who has only a particular care. For God, Whose care is universal, can bring good out of evil, as is shown by what has been said.

For the second argument, it is clear that God's power as well as His goodness and justice are manifest in His permission of sin. So when it is argued that God either can or cannot prevent evil, the answer is that He can prevent it, but that for the reasons already shown it does not behove Him to do so.

Neither is it valid to object that He therefore wishes evil to be; since He can prevent it but will not; for, as has been shown in the arguments for the truth, God cannot wish evil to be. He neither wishes nor does not wish it, but He permits it for the perfecting of the universe.

In the third argument S. Augustine and Aristotle are quoted on the subject of human knowledge, saying that it is better for a man not to have knowledge of that which is evil and vile for two reasons: first, that then he will have less opportunity to think of evil, since we cannot understand many things at the same time. And secondly, because knowledge of evil sometimes perverts the will towards evil. But these arguments do not concern God, Who without and detriment understands all the deeds of men and of witches.

For the fourth argument: S. Paul excepts the care of God from oxen, to show that a rational creature has through free-will command over its actions, as has been said. Therefore God has a special providence over him, that either blame or merit may be imputed to him, and he may receive either punishment or reward; but that God does not in this way care for the irrational beasts.

But to argue from that authority that the individuals of irrational creation have no part in Divine providence would be heretical; for it would be to maintain that all things are not subject to Divine providence, and would be contrary to the praise which is spoken in Holy Scripture concerning the Divine wisdom, which stretches mightily from end to end and disposes all things well; and it would be the error of the Rabbi Moses as was shown in the arguments for the truth.

For the fifth argument, man did not institute nature, but puts the works of nature to the greatest use known to his skill and strength. Therefore human providence does not extend to the inevitable phenomena of nature, as that the sun will rise to-morrow. But God's providence does extend to these things, since He is Himself the author of nature. Wherefore also defects in nature, even if they arise out of the natural course of things, are subject to Divine providence. And therefore Democritus and the other natural philosophers were in error when they ascribed whatever happened to the inferior creation to the mere chance of matter.

For the last argument: although every punishment is inflicted by God for sin, yet the greatest sinners are not always afflicted with witchcraft. And this may be because the devil does not wish to afflict and tempt those whom he sees to belong to him by just title, or because he does not wish them to be turned back to God. As it is said: Their plagues were multiplied, and they turned them to God, etc. And that all punishment is inflicted by God for sin is shown by what follows; for

according to S. Jerome: Whatever we suffer, we deserve for our sins.

Now it is declared that the sins of witches are more grievous than those of the bad angels and our first parents. Wherefore, just as the innocent are punished for the sins of their fathers, so are many blameless people damned and bewitched for the sins of witches.

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## [Question XIV](#)

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION XIV.*

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*The Enormity of Witches is Considered, and it is shown that the Whole Matter should be rightly Set Forth and Declared.*

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Concerning the enormity of crimes, it is asked whether the crimes of witches exceed, both in guilt, in pain, and in loss, all the evils which God allows and has permitted from the beginning of the world up till now. And it seems that they do not, especially as regards guilt. For the sin which a man commits when he could easily avoid it is greater than the sin which another man commits when he could not so easily avoid it. This is shown by S. Augustine, *de Ciuit. Dei*: There is great wickedness in sinning when it is so easy not to sin. But Adam, and others who have sinned when in a state of perfection or even of grace, could more easily because of the help of grace have avoided their sins — especially Adam who was created in grace — than many witches, who have not shared in such gifts. Therefore the sins of such are greater than all the crimes of witches.

And again in respect of punishment: the greatest punishment is due to the greater blame. But Adam's sin was the most heavily punished, as is plainly proved by the fact that both his guilt and his punishment are shown in all his posterity by the inheritance of original sin. Therefore his sin is greater than all other sins.

And again, the same is argued in respect of loss. For according to S. Augustine: A thing is evil in that it takes away from the good; therefore where there is the more good lost, there the greater evil has gone before. But the sin of our first parent brought the greatest loss both to nature and to grace, since it deprived us of innocence and immortality; and no subsequent sin has brought such loss, therefore, etc.

But the contrary side: that which includes the most causes of evil is the greater evil, and such are the sins of witches. For they can, with God's permission, bring every evil upon that which is good by nature and in form, as is declared in the Papal Bull. Besides, Adam sinned only in doing that which was wrong in one of two ways; for it was forbidden, but was not wrong in itself: but witches and other sinners sin in doing that which is wrong in both ways, wrong in itself, and forbidden, such as murders and many other forbidden things. Therefore their sins are heavier than other sins.

Besides, sin which comes from definite malice is heavier than sin which comes from ignorance. But witches, out of great malice, despise the Faith and the sacraments of the Faith, as many of them have confessed.

*Answer.* The evils which are perpetrated by modern witches exceed all other sin which God has ever permitted to be done, as was said in the title of this Question. And this can be shown in three ways, in so far as they are sins involving perversity of character, though it is different with the sins that contravene the other Theological virtues. First in general, by comparing their works indifferently with any other worldly crimes. Secondly in particular, by considering the species of

the superstition and into what pact they have entered with the devil. And thirdly, by comparing their sins with the sins of the bad Angels and even with that of our first parents.

And first, sin is threefold, involving guilt, punishment, and loss. Good also is correspondingly threefold, involving righteousness, felicity, and use. And righteousness corresponds with the guilt, felicity with punishment, and use with loss.

That the guilt of witches exceeds all other sins is apparent in this way. For according to the teaching of S. Thomas (II, 22, art. 2), there is in the matter of sin much that may be considered whereby the gravity or lightness of the sin may be deduced; and the same sin may be found heavy in one and light in another. For example, we can say that in fornication a young man sins, but an old man is mad. Yet those sins are, simply speaking, the heavier which are not only attended by the more extensive and more powerful circumstances, but are in their nature and quantity of a more essentially serious sort.

And so we can say that, though the sin of Adam was in some respects heavier than all other sins, inasmuch as he fell to the instigation of a smaller temptation, since it came only from within; and also because he could more easily have resisted on account of the original justice in which he was created: nevertheless in the form and quantity of sin, and in other respects which aggravate the sin the more in that it is the cause of many yet heavier sins, the sins of witches exceed all other sins. And this will be made still clearer in two ways.

For one sin is said to be greater than another in one or other of the following respects: in causality, as was the sin of Lucifer; in generality, as Adam's sin; in hideousness, as was the sin of Judas; in the difficulty of forgiving it, as is the sin against the Holy Ghost; in danger, as in the sin of covetousness; in inclination, as is the sin of the flesh; in the offending of the Divine Majesty, as is the sin of idolatry and infidelity; in the difficulty of combating it, as the sin of pride; in blindness of mind, as the sin of anger. Accordingly, after the sin of Lucifer, the works of witches exceed all other sins, in hideousness since they deny Him crucified, in inclination since the commit nastiness of the flesh with devils, in blindness of mind since in a pure spirit of malignity the rage and bring every injury upon the souls and bodies of men and beasts, as has been shown from what has been said before.

And this, indeed, is indicated, according to S. Isidore, by the word. For they are called witches (*maleficae*) on account of the enormity of their crimes, as has been said above.

Our contention is also deduced from the following. There are two gradations in sin, a turning away, and a change of heart. See our quotation from S. Augustine: Sin is to reject the incommutable good, and to cleave to things that are variable. And the turning away from God is as it were formal, just as the change of heart is as it were material. Therefore the more a man is separated from God by it, the heavier is the sin. And since infidelity is the chief cause of man's separation from God, the infidelity of witches stands out as the greatest of sins. And this is given the name of Heresy, which is Apostasy from the Faith; and in this witches sin throughout their whole lives.

For the sin of infidelity consists in opposing the Faith; and this may come about in two ways, by opposing a faith which has not yet been received, or by opposing it after it has been received. Of the first sort is the infidelity of the Pagans or Gentiles. In the second way, the Christian Faith may be denied in two ways: either by denying the prophecies concerning it, or by denying the actual manifestation of its truth. And the first of these is the infidelity of the Jews, and the second the infidelity of Heretics.

It is clear from this that the heresy of witches is the most heinous of the three degrees of infidelity; and this fact is proved both by reason and authority. For it is said in II. S. *Peter* ii: It has

been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from it. And it is reasonable to suppose that, just as he who does not perform what he has promised commits a greater sin than he who does not perform what he never promised, so the infidelity of the heretics, who while professing the faith of the Gospel fight against it by corrupting it, is a greater sin than that of the Jews and Pagans.

And again, the Jews sin more greatly than the Pagans; for they received the prophecy of the Christian Faith in the Old Law, which they corrupt through badly interpreting it, which is not the case with the Pagans. Therefore their infidelity is a greater sin than that of the Gentiles, who never received the Faith of the Gospel. But concerning Apostasy, S. Thomas says in the *Second of the Second*, question 12: Apostasy means a turning away from God and religion, and this may happen according to the different ways by which man is joined to God; that is, by faith, or by the subjection of the will to obedience, or by religion and Holy Orders. S. Raymund and Hostiensis say that Apostasy is a rash departure from the state of faith or obedience or Religion. Now if that which precedes is removed, that which follows from it is also removed; but the converse proposition is not true. Therefore Apostasy from the Faith is a greater sin than the other two forms of infidelity, since in its case a precedent Religion has been removed.

But according to S. Raymund, a man is not to be judged an Apostate or deserter, however far and long he may have strayed, unless he shows by his subsequent life that he has not thought of returning to the Faith. And this would be shown in the case of a cleric if he were to marry a wife, or commit some similar crime. In the same way it is an Apostasy of disobedience when a man wilfully spurns the teaching of the Church and the Bishops. And such a man must be convicted of his infamy, and be excommunicated.

Now when we speak of the Apostasy of witches, we mean the Apostasy of perfidy; and this is so much the more heinous, in that it springs from a pact made with the enemy of the Faith and the way of salvation. For witches are bound to make this pact, which is exacted by that enemy either in part or wholly. For we Inquisitors have found some witches who have denied all the articles of Faith, and others who have denied only a certain number of them; but they are all bound to deny true and sacramental confession. And so, even the Apostasy of Julian does not seem to have been so great, although in other respects he did more harm against the Church; but we cannot speak of that here.

But it may be incidentally objected that it is possible that they may keep the Faith in the thoughts of their hearts, which God alone, and not even any Angel, can see into; but do reverence and obedience to the devil only in outward form. The answer to this seems to be that there are two degrees of the Apostasy of perfidy. One consists in outward acts of infidelity, without the formation of any pact with the devil, as when one lives in the lands of the infidels and conforms his life to that of the Mohammedans. The other consists in a pact made with the devil by one who lives in Christian lands, In the first case, men who keep the Faith in their hearts but deny it in their outward acts, though they are not Apostates or Heretics, are guilty of deadly sin. For in this way Solomon showed reverence to the gods of his wives. And no one can be excused on the ground that he does this through fear; for S. Augustine says: It is better to die of hunger than to be fed by Idolaters. But however much witches may retain the Faith in their hearts while denying it with their lips, they are still to be judged Apostates, since they have made a treaty with death and a compact with hell. Wherefore S. Thomas (II, 4), speaking of such magic works, and of those who in any way seek help from devils, says: They are all Apostates from the Faith, by reason of a pact made with the Devil, either in word, when some invocation is used, or by some deed, even if there is no actual sacrifice. For no man can serve two masters.

To the same effect writes Blessed Albertus Magnus, where he asks whether the sin of Magicians and Astrologers is an Apostasy from the Faith. And he answers: In such there is always Apostasy either of word or of deed. For if any invocations are made, then there is an open pact made with the devil, and it is plainly Apostasy in word. But if their magic is simply a matter of action, then it is Apostasy in deed. And since in all these there is abuse of the Faith, seeing that they look for from the devil what they ought to look for from God, therefore they are always to be judged Apostates. See how clearly they set forth two degrees of Apostasy, understanding a third, namely, that of thought. And even if this last is lacking, yet witches are judged to be Apostates in word and deed. Therefore, as will be shown, they must be subject to the punishment of Heretics and Apostates.

And there is in them a third enormity of crime, exceeding all other heresies. For S. Augustine (XXVIII, 1 and 2) tells us that the whole life of infidels is a sin; and the gloss on *Romans* xiv says that everything which comes not of faith is sin. What then is to be thought of the whole life of witches, that is, of all their other actions which are not pleasing to the devil, such as fasting, attending church, communicating, and other things? For in all these things they commit deadly sin, as is shown as follows. So far have they fallen in sin that, although they have not lost all power of amendment (since sin does not corrupt the whole good of their nature, and a natural light yet remains in them); yet, because of their homage given to the devil, and unless they be absolved from it, all their works, even when they appear to be good, are rather of an evil nature. And this is not seen to be the case with other infidels.

For according to S. Thomas in the *Second of the Second*, question 10, Whether every action of an infidel is a sin; he says that the deeds of the unfaithful which are, of themselves, good, such as fasting, almsgiving, and deeds of that sort, are no merit to them because of their infidelity, which is a most grievous sin. Yet sin does not corrupt the whole good of their nature, and there remains in them a natural light. Therefore not ever deed of theirs is mortal sin, but only those which proceed from their very infidelity, or are related to it. For example, a Saracen fasts, to observe the law of Mohammed as to fasting, and a Jew observes his Feast days; but in such things he is guilty of mortal sin. And in this way is to be understood the above dictum of S. Augustine, that the whole life of infidels is sin.

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*That Witches Deserve the heaviest Punishment above All the Criminals of the World.*

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The crimes of witches, then, exceed the sins of all others; and we now declare what punishment they deserve, whether as Heretics or as Apostates. Now Heretics, according to S. Raymund, are punished in various ways, as by excommunication, deposition, confiscation of their goods, and death. The reader can be fully informed concerning all these by consulting the law relating to the sentence of excommunication. Indeed even their followers, protectors, patrons and defenders incur the heaviest penalties. For, besides the punishment of excommunication inflicted upon them, Heretics, together with their patrons, protectors and defenders, and with their children to the second generation on the father's side, and to the first degree on the mother's side, are admitted to no benefit or office of the Church. And if a Heretic have Catholic children, for the heinousness of his crime they are deprived of their paternal inheritance. And if a man be convicted, and refuse to be converted and abjure his heresy, he must at once be burned, if he is a layman. For if they who counterfeit money are summarily put to death, how much more must they who counterfeit the Faith? But if he is a cleric, after solemn degradation he is handed over to the secular Court to be put to death. But if they return to the Faith, they are to be imprisoned for life. But in

practice they are treated more leniently after recantation than they should be according to the judgement of the Bishops and Inquisition, as will be shown in the Third Part, where the various methods of sentencing such are treated of; that is to say, those who are arrested and convicted and have recanted their error.

But to punish witches in these ways does not seem sufficient, since they are not simple Heretics, but Apostates. More than this, in their very apostasy they do not deny the Faith for any fear of men or for any delight of the flesh, as has been said before; but, apart from their abnegation, even give homage to the very devils by offering them their bodies and souls. It is clear enough from this that, however much they are penitent and return to the Faith, they must not be punished like other Heretics with lifelong imprisonment, but must be made to suffer the extreme penalty. And because of the temporal injury which they do to men and beasts in various ways, the laws demand this. It is even equally culpable to learn as it is to teach such iniquities, say the laws concerning Soothsayers. Then how much more emphatically do they speak concerning witches, where they say that the penalty for them is the confiscation of their goods and decapitation. The laws also say much concerning those who by witchcraft provoke a woman to lust, or, conversely, cohabit with beasts. But these matters were touched upon on the First Question.

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## [Question XV](#)

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I.* *QUESTION XV.*

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*It is Shown that, on Account of the Sins of Witches, the Innocent are often Bewitched, yea, Sometimes even for their Own Sins.*

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It is a fact that, by Divine permission, many innocent people suffer loss and are punished by the aforesaid plagues, not for their own sins, but for those of witches. And lest this should seem to any a paradox, S. Thomas shows in the *Second of the Second*, quest. 8, that this is just in God. For he divides the punishments of this life into three classes. First, one man belongs to another; therefore, if a man be punished in his possessions, it may be that another man suffers for this punishment. For, bodily speaking, sons are a property of the father, and slaves and animals are the property of their masters; and so the sons are sometimes punished for their parents. Thus the son born to David from adultery quickly died; and the animals of the Amalekites were bidden to be killed. Yet the reason for these things remains a mystery.

Secondly, the sin of one may be passed on to another; and this in two ways. By imitation, as children imitate the sins of their parents, and slaves and dependents the sins of their masters, that they may sin more boldly. In this way the sons inherit ill-gotten gain, and slaves share in robberies and unjust feuds, in which they are often killed. And they who are subject to Governors sin the more boldly when they see them sin, even if they do not commit the same sins; wherefore they are justly punished.

Also the sin of one is passed on to another in the way of desert, as when the sins of wicked subjects are passed on to a bad Governor, because the sins of the subjects deserve a bad Governor. See *Job*: He makes Hypocrites to reign on account of the sins of the people.

Sin, and consequently punishment, can also be passed on through some consent or dissimulation. For when those in authority neglect to reprove sin, then very often the good are punished with the wicked, as S. Augustine says in the first book *de Ciuitate Dei*. An example was brought to our notice as Inquisitors. A town was once rendered almost destitute by the death of its citizens; and there was a rumour that a certain buried woman was gradually eating the shroud in which she had been buried, and that the plague could not cease until she had eaten the whole shroud and absorbed it into her stomach. A council was held, and the Podesta with the Governor of the city dug up the grave, and found half the shroud absorbed through the mouth and throat into the stomach, and consumed. In horror at this sight, the Podesta drew his sword and cut off her head and threw it out of the grave, and at once the plague ceased. Now the sins of that old woman were, by Divine permission, visited upon the innocent on account of the dissimulation of what had happened before. For when an Inquisition was held it was found that during a long time of her life she had been a Sorceress and Enchantress. Another example is the punishment of a pestilence because

David numbered the people.

Thirdly, sin is passed on by Divine permission in commendation of the unity of human society, that one man should take care for another by refraining from sin; and also to make sin appear the more detestable, in that the sin of one redounds upon all, as though all were one body. An example is the sin of Achan in *Joshua* vii.

We can add to these two other methods: that the wicked are punished sometimes by the good, and sometimes by other wicked men. For as Gratianus says (XXIII, 5), sometimes God punishes the wicked through those who are exercising their legitimate power at His command; and this in two ways: sometimes with merit on the part of the punishers, as when He punished the sins of the Canaanites through His people; sometimes with no merit on the part of the punishers, but even to their own punishment, as when He punished the tribe of Benjamin and destroyed it except for a few men. And sometimes He punishes by His nations being aroused, either by command or permission, but with no intention of obeying God, but rather greedy for their own gain, and therefore to their own damnation; as He now punished His people by the Turks, and did so more often by strange nations in the Old Law.

But it must be noted that for whatever cause a man be punished, if he does not bear his pains patiently, then it becomes a scourge, not a correction, but only of vengeance, that is, of punishment. See *Deuteronomy* xxxii: A fire is kindled in min anger (that is, my punishment; for there is no other anger in God), and shall burn unto the lowest hell (that is, vengeance shall begin here and burn unto the last damnation, as S. Augustine explains), And there is further authority concerning punishment in his Fourth Distinction. But if men patiently bear their scourges, and are patient in the state of grace, they take the place of a correction, as S. Thomas says in his Fourth Book. And this is true even of one punished for committing witchcraft, or of a witch, to a greater or less degree according to the devotion of the sufferer and the quality of his crime.

But the natural death of the body, being the last terror, is not a correction, since of its nature it partakes in the punishment for original sin. Nevertheless, according to Scotus, when it is awaited with resignation and devotion, and offered in its bitterness to God, it can in some way become a correction. But violent death, whether a man deserves it or not, is always a correction, if it is borne patiently and in grace. So much for punishments inflicted on account of the sins of others.

But God also punishes men in this life for their own sins, especially in the matter of bewitchment. For see *Tobias* vii: The devil has power over those who follow their lusts. And this is clear from what we have already said concerning the member and the genital powers, which God chiefly allows to be bewitched.

However, for the purpose of preaching to the public it is to be noted that, notwithstanding the aforesaid punishments which God inflicts on men for their own and others' sins, the preacher should keep as his basic principle and to the people this ruling of the law; which says, No one must be punished without guilt, unless there is some cause for doing so. And this ruling holds good in the Court of Heaven, that is, of God, just as it does in the human Courts of Justice, whether secular or ecclesiastic.

The preacher may predicate this of the Court of Heaven. For the punishment of God is of two kinds, spiritual and temporal. In the former, punishment is never found without guilt. In the latter it is sometimes found quite without guilt, but not without cause. The first, or spiritual punishment, is of three kinds; the first being forfeiture of grace and a consequent hardening in sin, which is never inflicted except for the sufferer's own guilt. The second is

the punishment of loss, that is, deprivation of glory, which is never inflicted without personal guilt in adults, or contracted guilt in children born from their parents' sin. The third is the punishment of pain, that is, the torture of hell fire, and is plainly due to guilt. Wherefore when it is said in *Exodus* xx: I am a jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation: it is understood as speaking of the imitators of their fathers' crimes, as Gratian has explained, Book I, quest. 4; where he also gives other expositions.

Now with regard to God's second, or temporal punishment: first, it may be, as has been said before, for the sin of another (but not without cause), or for personal guilt only, without any other's sin. But if you wish to know the causes for which God punishes, and even without any guilt of the sufferer or of another man, you may refer to the five methods which the Master expounds in Book IV, dist. 15, cap. 2. And you must take the three first causes, for the other two refer to personal guilt.

For he says that for five causes God scourges man in this life, or inflicts punishment. First, that God may be glorified; and this is when some punishment or affliction is miraculously removed, as in the case of the man born blind (*S. John* ix), or of the raising of Lazarus (*S. John* xi).

Secondly, if the first cause is absent, it is sent that merit may be acquired through the exercise of patience, and also that inner hidden virtue may be made manifest to others. Examples are *Job* i and *Tobias* ii.

Thirdly that virtue may be preserved through the humiliation of castigation. S. Paul is an example, who says of himself in II. *Corinthians* xii: There was given unto me a thorn in my flesh, the messenger of Satan. And according to Remigius this thorn was the infirmity of carnal desire. These are the cause that are without guilt in the sufferer.

Fourthly, that eternal damnation should begin in this life, that it might be in some way shown what will be suffered in hell. Examples are Herod (*Acts* xii) and Antiochus (II. *Maccabees* ix).

Fifthly, that man may be purified, by the expulsion and obliteration of his guilt through scourges. Examples may be taken from Miriam, Aaron's sister, who was stricken with leprosy, and from the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, according to S. Jerome, XXIII, 4. Or it may be for the correction of sin, as is exemplified by the case of David, who, after being pardoned for his adultery, was driven from his kingdom, as is shown in II. *Kings*, and is commented on by S. Gregory in his discourse on sin. It may, in fact, be said that every punishment that we suffer proceeds from our own sin, or at least from the original sin in which we were born, which is itself the cause of all causes.

But as to the punishment of loss, meaning by that eternal damnation which they will suffer in the future, no one doubts that all the damned will be tortured with grievous pains. For just as grace is followed by the blessed vision of the Kingdom of Heaven, so is mortal sin followed by punishment in hell. And just as the degrees of blessedness in Heaven are measured in accordance with the degrees of charity and grace in life, so the degrees of punishment in hell are measured according to the degree of crime in this life. See *Deuteronomy* xxv: The measure of punishment will be according to the measure of sin. And this is so with all other sins, but applies especially to witches. See *Hebrews* x: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing?

And such are the sins of witches, who deny the Faith, and work many evil bewitchments through the most Holy Sacrament, as will be shown in the Second Part.

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## [Question XVI](#)

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION XVI.*

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*The Foregoing Truths are Set out in Particular, this by a Comparison of the Works of Witches with Other Baleful Superstitions.*

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Now the foregoing truth concerning the enormity of witches' crimes is proved by comparing them with the other practices of Magicians and Diviners. For there are fourteen species of magic, springing from the three kinds of Divination. The first of these three is open invocation of devils. The second is no more than a silent consideration of the disposition and movement of some thing, as of the stars, or the days, or the hours, and such things. The third is the consideration of some human act for the purpose of finding out something that is hidden, and is called by the name of Sortilege.

And the species of the first form of Divination, that is, an open invocation of devils, are the following: Sorcery, Oneiromancy, Necromancy, Oracles, Geomancy, Hydromancy, Aeromancy, Pyromancy, and Soothsaying (see S. Thomas, *Second of the Second*, quest. 95, 26, and 5). The species of the second kind are Horoscopy, Haruspicy, Augury, Observation of Omens, Cheiromancy and Spatulamancy.

The species of the third kind vary according to all those things which are classed as Sortilege for the finding out of something hidden, such as the consideration of pricks and straws, and figures in molten lead. And S. Thomas speaks also of these in the above-quoted reference.

Now the sins of witches exceed all these crimes, as will be proved in respect of the foregoing species. There can then be no question concerning smaller crimes.

For let us consider the first species, in which those who are skilled in sorcery and glamour deceive the human senses with certain apparitions, so that corporeal matter seems to become different to the sight and the touch, as was treated of above in the matter of the methods of creating illusions. Witches are not content with such practices in respect of the genital member, causing some prestidigitatory illusion of its disappearance (although this disappearance is not an actual fact); but they even frequently take away the generative power itself, so that a woman cannot conceive, and a man cannot perform the act even when he still retains his member. And without any illusion, they also cause abortion after conception, often accompanied with many other ills. And they even appear in various forms of beasts, as has been shown above.

Necromancy is the summoning of and speech with the dead, as is shown by its etymology; for it is derived from the Greek word *Nekros*, meaning a corpse, and *Manteia*, meaning divination. And they accomplish this by working some spell over the blood of a man or some animal, knowing that the devil delights in such sin, and loves blood and the pouring out of blood. Wherefore, when they think that they call the dead from hell to answer

their questions, it is the devils in the likeness of the dead who appear and give such answers. And of this sort was the art of that great Pythoness spoken of in I. *Kings* xxviii, who raised up Samuel at the instance of Saul.

But let no one think that such practices are lawful because the Scripture records that the soul of the just Prophet, summoned from Hades to predict the event of Saul's coming war, appeared through the means of a woman who was a witch. For, as S. Augustine says to Simplicianus: It is not absurd to believe that it was permitted by some dispensation, not by the potency of any magic art, but by some hidden dispensation unknown to the Pythoness or to Saul, that the spirit of that just man should appear before the sight of the king, to deliver the Divine sentence against him. Or else it was not really the spirit of Samuel aroused from its rest, but some phantasm and imaginary illusion of devils caused by the machinations of the devil; and the Scripture calls that phantasm by the name of Samuel, just as the images of things are called by the names of the things they [represent](#). This he says in his answer to the question whether divination by the invocation of devils is lawful. In the same *Summa* the reader will find the answer to the question whether there are degrees of prophecy among the Blessed; and he may refer to S. Augustine, XXVI, 5. But this has little to do with the deeds of witches, which retain in themselves no vestige of piety, as is apparent from a consideration of their works; for they do not cease to shed innocent blood, to bring hidden things to light under the guidance of devils, and by destroying the soul with the body spare neither the living nor the dead.

Oneiromancy may be practised in two ways. The first is when a person uses dreams so that he may dip into the occult with the help of the revelation of devils invoked by him, with whom he has entered into an open pact. The second is when a man uses dreams for knowing the future, in so far as there is such virtue in dreams proceeding from Divine revelation, from a natural and intrinsic or extrinsic cause; and such divination would not be unlawful. So says S. Thomas.

And that preachers may have at least the nucleus of an understanding of this matter, we must first speak about the Angels. An Angel is of limited power, and can more effectively reveal the future when the mind is adapted to such revelations than when it is not. Now the mind is chiefly so adapted after the relaxation of exterior and interior movement, as when nights are silent and the fumes of motion are quieted; and these conditions are fulfilled round about the dawn, when digestion is completed. And I say this of us who are sinners, to whom the Angels in their Divine piety, and in the execution of their offices, reveal certain things, so that when we study at the time of the dawn we are given an understanding of certain occult matters in the Scriptures. For a good Angel presides over our understanding, just as God does over our will, and the stars over our bodies. But to certain more perfect men the Angel can at any hour reveal things, whether they are awake or asleep. However, according to Aristotle, *de Somno et Uigilia*, such men are more apt to receive revelations at one time than at another; and this is the case in all matters of magic.

Secondly, it is to be noted that it happens through Nature's care for and regulation of the body, that certain future events have their natural cause in a man's dreams. And then those dreams or visions are not cause, as was said in the case of Angels, but only signs of that which is coming to a man in the future, such as health or sickness or danger. And this is the opinion of Aristotle. For in the dreams of the spirit Nature images the disposition of the heart, by which sickness or some other thing naturally comes to a man in the future. For is a

man dreams of fires, it is a sign of a choleric disposition; if of flying or some such thing, it is a sign of a sanguine disposition; if he dreams of water or some other liquid, it is a sign of a phlegmatic, and if he dreams of terrene matters, it is a sign of a melancholy disposition. And therefore doctors are very often helped by dreams in their diagnosis (as Aristotle says in the same book).

But these are slight matters in comparison with the unholy dreams of witches. For when they do not wish, as has been mentioned above, to be bodily transferred to a place, but desire to see what their fellow-witches are doing, it is their practice to lie down on their left side in the name of their own and of all devils; and these things are revealed to their vision in images. And if they seek to know some secret, either for themselves or for others, they learn it in dreams from the devil, by reason of an open, not a tacit, pact entered into with him. And this pact, again, is not a symbolical one, accomplished by the sacrifice of some animal, or some act of sacrilege, or by embracing the worship of some strange cult; but it is an actual offering of themselves, body and soul, to the devil, by a sacrilegiously uttered and inwardly purposed abnegation of the Faith. And not content with this, they even kill, or offer to devils, their own and others' children.

Another species of divination is practised by Pythons, so called from Pythian Apollo, who is said to have been the originator of this kind of divination, according to S. Isidore. This is not effected by dreams or by converse with the dead, but by means of living men, as in the case of those who are lashed into a frenzy by the devil, either willingly or unwillingly, only for the purpose of foretelling the future, and not for the perpetration of any other monstrosities. Of this sort was the girl mentioned in *Acts xvi*, who cried after the Apostles that they were the servants of the true God; and S. Paul, being angered by this, commanded the spirit to come out of her. But it is clear that there is no comparison between such things and the deeds of witches, who, according to S. Isidore, are so called for the magnitude of their sins and the enormity of their crimes.

Wherefore, for the sake of brevity, there is no need to continue this argument in respect of the minor forms of divination, since it has been proved in respect of the major forms. For the preacher may, if he wishes, apply these arguments to the other forms of divination: to Geomancy, which is concerned with terrene matters, such as iron or polished stone; Hydromancy, which deals with water and crystals; Aeromancy, which is concerned with the air; Pyromancy, which is concerned with fire; Soothsaying, which has to do with the entrails of animals sacrificed on the devil's altars. For although all these are done by means of open invocation of devils, they cannot be compared with the crimes of witches, since they are not directly purposed for the harming of men or animals or the fruits of the earth, but only for the foreknowledge of the future. The other species of divination, which are performed with a tacit, but not an open, invocation of devils, are Horoscopy, or Astrology, so called from the consideration of the stars at birth; Haruspicy, which observes the days and hours; Augury, which observes the behaviour and cries of birds; Omens, which observe the words of men; and Cheiromancy, which observes the lines of the hand, or of the paws of animals. And one who wishes may refer to the teaching of Nider, and he will find much as to when such things are lawful and when they are not. But the works of witches are never lawful.

## Question XVII

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*“Represent.” For a full discussion of the appearance of Samuel at Endor, see my “History of Witchcraft,” c.v.: “The Witch in Holy Writ,” pp. 176-81.*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION XVII.*

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*A Comparison of their Crimes under Fourteen Heads, with the Sins of the Devils of all and every Kind.*

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So heinous are the crimes of witches that they even exceed the sins and the fall of the bad Angels; and if this is true as to their guilt, how should it not also be true of their punishments in hell? And it is not difficult to prove this by various arguments with regard to their guilt. And first, although the sin of Satan is unpardonable, this is not on account of the greatness of his crime, having regard to the nature of the Angels, with particular attention to the opinion of those who say that the Angels were created only in a state of nature, and never in a state of grace. And since the good of grace exceeds the good of nature, therefore the sins of those who fall from a state of grace, as do the witches by denying the faith which they received in baptism, exceed the sins of the Angels. And even if we say that the Angels were created, but not confirmed, in grace; so also witches, though they are not created in grace, have yet of their own will fallen from grace; just as Satan sinned of his own will.

Secondly, it is granted that Satan's sin is unpardonable for various other reasons. For S. Augustine saus that he sinned at the instigation of none, therefore his sin is justly remediable by none. And S. John Damascene says that he sinned in his understanding against the character of God; and that his sin was the greater by reason of the nobility of his understanding. For the servant who knows the will of his master, etc. The same authority says that, since Satan is incapable of repentance, therefore he is incapable of pardon; and this is due to his very nature, which, being spiritual, could only be changed once, when he changed it for ever; but this is not so with men, in whom the flesh is always warring against the spirit. Or because he sinned in the high places of heaven, whereas man sins in the earth.

But notwithstanding all this, his sin is in many respects small in comparison with the crimes of witches. First, as [S. Anselm](#) showed in one of his *Sermons*, he sinned in his pride while there was yet no punishment for sin. But witches continue to sin after great punishments have been often inflicted upon many other witches, and after the punishments which the Church teaches them have been inflicted by reason of the devil and his fall; and they make light of all these, and hasten to commit, not the least deadly of sins, as do other sinners who sin through infirmity or wickedness yet not from habitual malice, but rather the most horrible crimes from the deep malice of their hearts.

Secondly, although the Bad Angel fell from innocence to guilt, and thence to misery and punishment; yet he fell from innocence once only, in such a way that he was never restored. But the sinner who is restored to innocence by baptism, and again falls from it, falls very deep. And this is especially true of witches, as is proved by their crimes.

Thirdly, he sinned against the Creator; but we, and especially witches, sin against the Creator and the Redeemer.

Fourthly, he forsook God, who permitted him to sin but accorded him no pity; whereas we, and witches above all, withdraw ourselves from God by our sins, while, in spite of his permission of our sins, He continually pities us and prevents us with His countless benefits.

Fifthly, when he sinned, God rejected him without showing him and grace; whereas we wretches run into sin although God is continually calling us back.

Sixthly, he keeps his heart hardened against a punisher; but we against a merciful persuader. Both sin against God; but he against a commanding God, and we against One who dies for us, Whom, as we have said, wicked witches offend above all.

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*The Solutions of the Arguments again Declare the Truth by Comparison.*

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To the arguments. The answer to the first is clear from what was said in the beginning of this whole question. It was submitted that one sin ought to be thought heavier than another; and that the sins of witches are heavier than all others in respect of guilt, but not in respect of the penalties that they entail. To this it must be said that the punishment of Adam, just as his guilt, may be considered two ways; either as touching him personally, or as touching the whole of nature, that is, the posterity which came after him. As to the first, greater sins have been committed after Adam; for he sinned only in doing that which was evil, not in itself, but because it was forbidden. Therefore such sins deserve the heavier punishment.

As to the second, it is true that the greatest punishment resulted from the first sin; but this is only indirectly true, in that through Adam all posterity was infected with original sin, and he was the first father of all those for whom the Only Son of God was able to atone by the power which was ordained. Moreover, Adam in his own person, with the mediation of Divine grace, repented, and was afterwards saved through the Sacrifice of Christ. But the sins of witches are incomparably greater, since they are not content with their own sins and perdition, but ever draw countless others after them.

And thirdly, it follows from what has been said that it was by accident that Adam's sin involved the greater injury. For he found nature uncorrupted, and it was inevitable, and not of his own will, that he left it defiled; therefore it does not follow that his sin was intrinsically greater than others. And again, posterity would have committed the same sin if it had found nature in the same state. Similarly, he who has not found grace does not commit so deadly a sin as he who has found it and lost it. This is the solution of S. Thomas (II, 21, art. 2), in his solution of the second argument. And if anyone wishes fully to understand this solution, he must consider that even if Adam had kept his original innocence, he would not have passed it down to all posterity; for, as S. Anselm says, anyone coming after him could still have sinned. See also S. Thomas, dist. 20, where he considers whether new-born children would have been confirmed in grace; and in dist. 101, whether men who are now saved would have been saved if Adam had not sinned.

## Question XVIII

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*“S. Anselm.” Doctor of the Church; Archbishop of Canterbury, born at Aosta, a Burgundian town in the borders of Lombardy, 1033-34; died 21 April, 1109. High praise is given him in the Breviary Office for his Feast, 21 April, Second Nocturn of Matins, Lection VI: “Obdormiuit in Domino, famam non solum miraculorum et sanctitatis (praecipue ob insignem deuotionem erga Domini nostri passionem, et beatam Uirginem eius Matrem) assecutus, sed etiam doctrinae, quam ad defensionem Christianae religionis, animarum profectum, et omnium theologorum, qui sacras litteras scholastica methodo tradiderunt, normam coelitus hausisse ex eius omnibus apparet.” There are several collections of the works of S. Anselm, but of these few, if any, can claim to be critical, and none are adapted for modern requirements. At the same time there are very numerous separate editions, and even translations of the more important treatises, in particular the “Cur Deus Homo.”*

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# THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

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## *PART I. QUESTION XVIII.*

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*Here follows the Method of Preaching against and Controverting Five Arguments of Laymen and Lewd Folk, which seem to be Variously Approved, that God does not Allow so Great Power to the Devil and Witches as is involved in the Performance of such Mighty Works of Witchcraft*

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Finally, let the preacher be armed against certain arguments of laymen, and even of some learned men, who deny, up to a certain point, that there are witches. For, although they conceded the malice and power of the devil to inflict such evils at his will, they deny that the Divine permission is granted to him, and will not admit that God allows such things to be done. And although they have no method in their argument, groping blindly now this way and now that, it is yet necessary to reduce their assertions to five arguments, from which all their cavillings proceed. And the first is, that God does not permit the devil to rage against men wish such great power.

The question put is whether the Divine permission must always accompany an infliction caused by the devil through a witch. And give arguments are submitted to prove that God does not permit it, and that therefore there is no witchcraft in the world. And the first argument is taken from God; the second from the devil; the third from the witch; the fourth from the affliction ascribed to witchcraft; and the fifth from the preachers and judges, on the assumption that they have so preached against and punished witches that they would have no security in life.

And first as follows: God can punish men for their sins, and He punishes with the sword, famine, and pestilence; as well as with various and countless other infirmities to which human nature is subject. Wherefore, there being no need for Him to add further punishments, He does not permit witchcraft.

Secondly, if that which is said of the devil were true, namely, that he can obstruct the generative forces so that a woman cannot conceive, or that if she does conceive, he can cause an abortion; or, if there is no abortion, he can cause the children to be killed after birth; in that case he would be able to destroy the whole world; and it could also be said that the devil's works were stronger than God's, since the Sacrament of matrimony is a work of God.

Thirdly, they argue from man himself, that if there were any witchcraft in the world, then some men would be more bewitched than others; and that it is a false argument to say that men are bewitched for a punishment of their sins, and therefore false to maintain that there is witchcraft in the world. And they prove that it is false by arguing that, if it were true, then the greater sinners would receive the greater punishment, and that this is not the case; for sinners are less punished sometimes than the just, as is seen in the case of innocent children who are alleged to be bewitched.

Their fourth argument can be added to that which they adduce concerning God; namely, that a thing which a man can prevent and does not prevent, but allows it to be done, may be judged to proceed from his will. But since God is All-Good, He cannot wish evil, and therefore cannot permit evil to be done which He is able to prevent.

Again, taking their argument from the infliction itself, which is alleged to be due to witchcraft; they submit that they are similar to natural infirmities and defects, and may therefore be caused by a natural defect. For it may happen through some natural defect that a man becomes lame, or blind, or loses his reason, or even dies; wherefore such things cannot confidently be ascribed to witches.

Lastly, they argue that preachers and judges have preached and practised against witches in such a way that, if there were witches, their lives would never be safe from them on account of the great hatred that witches would have for them.

But the contrary arguments may be taken from the First Question, where it treats of the third postulate of the First Part; and those points may be propounded to the people which are most fitting. How God permits evil to be, even though He does not wish it; but He permits it for the wonderful perfecting of the universe, which may be considered in the fact that good things are more highly commendable, are more pleasing and laudable, when they are compared with bad things; and authority can be quoted in support of this. Also that the depth of God's Divine wisdom, justice, and goodness should be shown forth, whereas it would otherwise remain hidden.

For a brief settlement of this question there are various treatises available on this subject for the information of the people, to the effect, namely, that God justly permitted two Falls, that of the Angels and that of our first parents; and since these were the greatest of all falls, it is no matter for wonder if other smaller ones are permitted. But it is in their consequences that those two Falls were the greatest, not in their circumstances, in which last respect, as was shown in the last Question, the sins of witches exceed those of the bad angels and our first parents. In the same place it is shown how God justly permitted those first Falls, and anyone is at liberty to collect and enlarge upon what is there said as much as he wishes.

But we must answer their arguments. As to the first, that God punishes quite enough by means of natural diseases, and by sword and famine, we make a threefold answer. First, that God did not limit His power to the processes of nature, or even to the influences of the stars, in such a way that He cannot go beyond those limits; for He has often exceeded them in the punishment of sins, by sending plagues and other afflictions beyond all the influence of that stars; as when He punished the sin of pride in David, when he numbered the people, by sending a pestilence upon the people.

Secondly, it agrees with the Divine wisdom that He should so govern all things that He allows them to act at their own instigation. Consequently, it is not His purpose to prevent altogether the malice of the devil, but rather to permit it as far as He sees it to be for the ultimate good of the universe; although it is true that the devil is continually held in check by the good Angels, so that he may not do all the harm that he wishes. Similarly He does not propose to restrain the human sins which are possible to man through his free-will, such as the abnegation of the Faith, and the devotion of himself to the devil, which things are in the power of the human will. From these two premisses it follows that, when God is most offended, He justly permits those evils which are chiefly sought for by witches, and for which they deny the Faith, up to the extent of the devil's power; and such is the ability to

injure men, animals, and the fruits of the earth.

Thirdly, God justly permits those evils which indirectly cause the greatest uneasiness and torment to the devil; and of such a sort are those evils which are done by witches through the power of devils. For the devil is indirectly tormented very greatly when he sees that, against his will, God uses all evil for the glory of His name, for the commendation of the Faith, for the purgation of the elect, and for the acquisition of merit. For it is certain that nothing can be more galling to the pride of the devil, which he always rears up against God (as it is said: The pride of them that hate Thee increases ever), than that God should convert his evil machinations to His own glory. Therefore God justly permits all these things.

Their second argument has been answered before; but there are two points in it which must be answered in detail. In the first place, far from its being true that the devil, or his works, as stronger than God, it is apparent that his power is small, since he can do nothing without the Divine permission. Therefore it may be said that the devil's power is small in comparison with the Divine permission, although it is very great in comparison with earthly powers, which it naturally excels, as is shown in the often quoted text in *Job xi*: There is no power on earth to be compared with him.

In the second place, we must answer the question with God permits witchcraft to affect the generative powers more than any other human function. This has been dealt with above, under the title, How witches can obstruct the generative powers and the venereal act. For it is on account of the shamefulness of that act, and because the original sin due to the guilt of our first parents is inherited by means of that act. It is symbolized also by the serpent, who was the first instrument of the devil.

To their third we answer that the devil has more intention and desire to tempt the good than the wicked; although he does in fact tempt the wicked more than the good, for the reason that the wicked have more aptitude than the good to respond to his temptation. In the same way, he is more eager to injure the good than the bad, but he finds it easier to injure the wicked. And the reason for this is, according to S. Gregory, that the more often a man gives way to the devil, the harder he makes it for himself to struggle against him. But since it is the wicked who most often give way to the devil, their temptations are the hardest and most frequent, as they have not the shield of Faith with which to protect themselves. Concerning this shield S. Paul speaks in *Ephesians vi*. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. But on the other hand, he assails the good more bitterly than the wicked. And the reason for this is that he already possesses the wicked, but not the good; and therefore he tried the harder to draw into his power through tribulation the just, who are not his, than the wicked, who are already his. In the same way, an earthly prince more severely chastises those who disobey his laws, or injure his kingdom, than those who do not set themselves against him.

In answer to their fourth argument, in addition to what has already been written on this subject, the preacher can expound the truth that God permits evil to be done, but does not wish it to be done, by the five signs of the Divine will, which are Precept, Prohibition, Advice, Operation, and Permission. See S. Thomas, especially in his First Part, quest. 19, art. 12, where this is very plainly set forth. For although there is only one will in God, which is God Himself, just as His Essence is One; yet in respect of its fulfilment, His will is shown and signified to us in many ways, as the *Psalms* says: The mighty works of the Lord are fulfilled in all His wishes. Wherefore there is a distinction between the actual essential Will of God and its visible effects; even as the will, properly so called, is the will of a man's good



pleasure, but in a metaphorical sense it is the will expressed by outward signs. For it is by signs and metaphors that we are shown that God wishes this to be.

We may take an example from a human father who, while he has only one will in himself, expresses that will in five ways, either by his own agency, or through that of someone else. Through his own agency he expresses it in two ways, either directly or indirectly. Directly, when he himself does a thing; and then it is Operation. Indirectly, when he does not hinder someone else from acting (see Aritotle's *Physics*, IV: Prohibition is indirect causation), and this is called the sign of Permission. And the human father signifies his will through the agency of someone else in three ways. Either he orders someone to do something, or conversely forbids something; and these are the signs of Precept and Prohibition. Or he persuades and advises someone to do something; and this is the sign of Advice. And just as the human will is manifested in these five ways, so is God's will. For that God's will is shown by Precept, Prohibition, and Advice is seen in *S. Matthew* vi: Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven: that is to say, may we on earth fulfil His Precepts, avoid His Prohibitions, and follow His Advice. And in the same way, S. Augustine shows that Permission and Operation are signs of God's will, where he says in the *Enchiridion*: Nothing is done unless Almighty God wishes it to be done, either by permitting it or by Himself doing it.

To return to the argument; it is perfectly true that when a man can prevent a thing, and does not, that thing may be said to proceed from his will. And the inference that God, being All-Good, cannot wish evil to be done, is also true in respect of the actual Good Pleasure of God's Will, and also in respect of four of the signs of His Will; for it is needless to say that He cannot operate evil, or command evil to be done, or fail to be opposed to evil, or advise evil; but He can, however, permit evil to be done.

And if it is asked how it is possible to distinguish whether an illness is caused by witchcraft or by some natural physical defect, we answer that there are various methods. And the first is by means of the judgement of doctors. See the words of S. Augustine *On the Christian Doctrine*: To this class of superstition belong all charms and amulets suspended or bound about the person, which the School of Medicine despises. For example, doctors may perceive from the circumstances, such as the patient's age, healthy complexion, and the reaction of his eyes, that his disease does not result from any defect of the blood or the stomach, or any other infirmity; and they therefore judge that it is not due to any natural defect, but to some extrinsic cause. And since that extrinsic cause cannot be any poisonous infection, which would be accompanied by ill humours in the blood and stomach, they have sufficient reason to judge that it is due to witchcraft.

And secondly, when the disease is incurable, so that the patient can be relieved by no drugs, but rather seems to be aggravated by them.

Thirdly, the evil may come so suddenly upon a man that it can only be ascribed to witchcraft. An example of how this happened to one man has been made known to us. A certain well-born citizen of Spire had a wife who was of such an obstinate disposition that, though he tried to please her in every way, yet she refused in nearly every way to comply with his wishes, and was always plaguing him with abusive taunts. It happened that, on going into his house one day, and his wife railing against him as usual with opprobrious words, he wished to go out of the house to escape from quarrelling. But she quickly ran before him and locked the door by which he wished to go out; and loudly swore that, unless he beat her, there was no honesty or faithfulness in him. At these heavy words he stretched

out his hand, not intending to hurt her, and struck her lightly with his open palm on the buttock; whereupon he suddenly fell to the ground and lost all his senses, and lay in bed for many weeks afflicted with a most grievous illness. Now it is obvious that this was not a natural illness, but was caused by some witchcraft of the woman. And very many similar cases have happened, and been made known to many.

There are some who can distinguish such illnesses by means of a certain practice, which is as follows. They hold molten lead over the sick man, and pour it into a bowl of water. And if the lead condenses into some image, they judge that the sickness is due to witchcraft. And when such men are asked whether the image so formed is caused by the work of devils, or is due to some natural cause, they answer that it is due to the power of Saturn over lead, the influence of that planet being in other respects evil, and that the sun has a similar power over gold. But what should be thought of this practice, and whether it is lawful or not, will be discussed in the Second Part of this treatise. For the Canonists say that it is lawful that vanity may be confounded by vanity; but the Theologians hold a directly opposite view, saying that it is not right to do evil that good may come.

In their last argument they advance several objections. First, why do not witches become rich? Secondly, why, having the favour of princes, do they not co-operate for the destruction of all their enemies? Thirdly, why are they unable to injure Preachers and others who persecute them?

For the first, it is to be said that witches are not generally rich for this reason: that the devils like to show their contempt for the Creator by buying witches for the lowest possible price. And also, lest they should be conspicuous by their riches.

Secondly, they do not injure princes because they wish to retain, as far as possible, their friendship. And if it is asked why they do not hurt their enemies, it is answered that a good Angel, working on the other side, prevents such witchcraft. Compare the passage in [Daniel](#): The Prince of the Persians withstood me for twenty-one days. See S. Thomas in the *Second Book of Sentences*, where he debates whether there is any contest among the good Angels, and of what sort.

Thirdly, it is said that they cannot injure Inquisitors and other officials, because they dispense public justice. Many examples could be adduced to prove this, but time does not permit it.

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## [Second Part](#)

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*“Daniel” x, 13: “But the prince of the kingdom of the Persians resisted me for one-and-twenty days: And behold Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, and I remained there by the King of the Persians.” The Prince of the Persians is the angel guardian of Persia: who, according to his office, seeking the spiritual good of the Persians, was desirous that many of the Jews should remain among them.*

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