

V1_2nd_of_Advent= The Superstition of Fortune-Telling

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No Salvation Without Prayer !

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JMJ

U.I.O.G.D.

Ave Maria!

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, we love Thee, save souls

O God come to our assistance. Jesus, Mary, Joseph please make haste to help us!

+ + + Jesus, Mary, Joseph + + +

VOL. I = THE BAD CHRISTIAN

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

The Superstition of Fortune-Telling

“What went you out to see? A prophet?” —Matt. 9: 9.

The Jews had a great opinion of John the Baptist, for they went out into the desert to see him, to admire his wonderful mode of life, and to hear his preaching. On one occasion the priests and Levites sent messengers to ask him: “Who art thou? Art thou Elias, or perhaps the Messiah himself?” Still these men did not know exactly what he was. Christ therefore took occasion to explain to them one day the great sanctity of his precursor, and to show them that it was not without reason that they went out to see such a great man. “What went you out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it was written: Behold, I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.” There are still prophets to be found here and there in the world, to whom people have recourse in certain circumstances for help and advice. I will ask these people: “What went you out to see? A prophet?” Yes, but not a holy prophet; a false prophet, who, under the pretence of giving you good advice or helping you in your necessity, devours your souls like a ravening wolf in sheep’s clothing, and brings them to hell. It is my purpose to-day to warn you against these false prophets or fortune-tellers. Understand, then:

I. That to have recourse to them, on any occasion whatever for help or advice, is a mortal sin.

II. That the customary excuses for such conduct are all vain and worthless.

I. It is a mortal sin to ask help from the devil; and this is done by those who have recourse to fortune-tellers or clairvoyants. They go to these people to obtain the cure of

certain diseases in man or beast, to recover lost or stolen goods, to secure the return of people who have escaped or lost their way, or to ascertain whether a certain enterprise is likely to succeed or not. They pay them for advice and help, and the man or woman thus consulted is expected to cure the disease, or point out the thief; to say where the lost or stolen money or property is hidden; to compel the person who has escaped to return, or to say whether the undertaking will succeed or not; and all this by means that are in themselves superstitious and utterly inadequate (naturally speaking) to produce the effects required. All who consult such people in any matter whatever, or ask advice from them, are worshippers of the devil, and are guilty of making a contract with him and asking help from him.

But because they thus deal indirectly with the devil they will tell you: "God forbid that I should have anything to do with the devil! I only seek help from wise men on earth, not from the demons in hell; and I nearly always find what I seek!" But what is the difference, when you want a favor, between handing in your petition to the President with your own hands, or getting a member of his Cabinet or one of his friends to hand it in for you? Do you not ask a favor in one way just as in the other? Nay, it is very probable that you are more likely to obtain your request through the friend of the President, than if you made it yourself in person. What difference is there between calling upon the devil yourself for aid, or appealing to his agents and ministers, who are sure to help you only by diabolical means?

Where do the people whom you consult get their knowledge of healing? How do they know the thief who has stolen your money, or the place in which he has hidden it? How can they say whether your undertaking is to turn out a success or not? Have they received private revelations from God, or are they endowed with a special power of working miracles? Not very likely. It is true God knows all things. He sees afar off as clearly as close at hand; he knows the future as well as the present; but he reserves that knowledge to himself.

God can communicate to creatures a portion of this knowledge; he can reveal to them hidden and future things; he can give them the grace to work miracles, and he really has bestowed this special grace and knowledge on many Saints in the Old and the New Testament. Thus Samuel prophesied to Saul where he should find his father's asses, and gave him certain signs by which he might know that God had chosen him king of Israel. And everything happened to Saul as Samuel had foretold. Naaman, the general of the king of Syria, had recourse to the prophet Eliseus to be cleansed from leprosy. And Eliseus sent a messenger to him, saying: "Go and wash seven times in the Jordan, and thy flesh shall recover health, and thou shalt be clean." Naaman washed in the Jordan seven times, and his health was restored and he was made clean. But Samuel and Eliseus were holy men: publicly appointed by God as prophets. The people were told to go to them, and were assured that they would learn from them the divine will.

Who has made prophets of fortune-tellers? When has it been revealed, either in the written or unwritten word of God, that he will speak by their mouths, and make known

hidden and future things? Can it be proved that they have received from on high the power of working miracles? Where are their signs of extraordinary sanctity to prove that God has selected and appointed them to such an office? At all events, neither the prophets of old nor the Saints of our times ever asked for money for healing the sick by a miracle, or for making known hidden and future things, while the contrary is the case with those false prophets, who take good care that they are well paid for their jugglery. You will get very little advice or help from them unless you pay them for it.

No reasonable person will believe that fortune-tellers get their real or supposed knowledge of hidden and future things from God, or from his inspiration. Therefore it must come from the devil and by his help, in virtue of a compact entered into with him, either orally or in writing. But how can the devil infuse this knowledge into his instruments? How can he foretell the future, since God has reserved that knowledge to himself and to those to whom he reveals it? Neither the Angels nor the devils can by their mere natural powers have any knowledge of future timings, or of the secret thoughts of one's mind. Since future events depend either on the free will of God or of man, it is impossible to have any certain knowledge of either. The Angels and the devils may indeed conclude with a certain amount of probability, from a man's inclinations and the circumstances in which he is placed, what will be likely to happen to him, but a certain knowledge of it they cannot have, because the man is free, and can—and very often does—act against his inclinations and in spite of his circumstances. Thus, neither the devil nor an angel can know, without a special revelation, whether I am going into a certain house or company this evening, nor do they know whether I am going to travel to-morrow. The devil can never predict such things with infallible certainty. Hence, when he prophesies any of these things, either immediately or by means of his agents, what he says is mere guesswork. If it turns out true, well and good for him, because it helps him to deceive souls and to seduce them all the easier.

To how many has he not promised a long life who died immediately after? How often has he not foretold immediate death to those who lived to a ripe old age? Galcazo, Duke of Milan, was once told by a fortune-teller that he would die prematurely. "And what," asked the duke, "will be your destiny?" "Oh," said the other, "I will live to be very old." "Aha!" said the duke; "I see that your art has deceived you considerably on this occasion. You must know that I am a better prophet than you; you will die before me, and I will prove to you that what I say is true!" Thereupon he had him strangled.

With regard to lost and stolen things, the thief who took them and the place in which they are hidden, since all these are visible things and the work of his own tools, there is no doubt that the devil knows all about them, and therefore he can easily communicate the knowledge of them to fortune-tellers. Yet even in this he is not always to be trusted, for the father of lies often denounces an innocent person as guilty, either for the purpose of deceiving men, or to cause some greater misfortune. There was once a peasant who wrapped up some money he had just received in a piece of fresh hide, and laid it on a bench outside the door whilst he was engaged in doing some work. As soon as he turned

his back a pig came up and swallowed down the hide with the money. The peasant looked everywhere for his money, but could not find it. "Where can it have gone to?" he said. "There was no one near the house; I must and will find out all about it at once!" So saying, he ran off to a certain woman in the village, who had the reputation of knowing more than other people, to ask her what had become of his money. The witch told him that he must wait a little, and not dare to follow her. She then crept into a dark hole, and after some frightful incantations and conjuring, she cried out in a loud voice: "Where is the money that this man has lost?" A terrible voice answered her, saying: "The man's own pig has eaten it. But you must tell him that his wife has taken it, so that there may be strife and disunion in the house!" The witch did as she was directed. But the peasant had seen and heard everything that went on in the dark hole, and when he came home he killed the pig and found the purse in its stomach.

False prophets of this kind are those suspicious characters, to whom Christians have recourse for the cure of their diseases, the recovery of lost property, or the telling of their fortunes. What else is it all but asking the devil for advice and help? And this is done by Christians who have sworn fidelity to Jesus Christ, who worship the one true God, and who have solemnly renounced the devil and all his works in Baptism. And it is done without shame, as if there were no harm in it.

II. They say, to excuse themselves: "What does it matter to me what the fortune-teller or clairvoyant does, or what art he or she makes use of? All I want is to recover my lost property, to get rid of my disease, or to find out something that interests me very much. I protest that I wish to have nothing to do with the devil!"

You may protest what you please a thousand times; it remains true that you have dealings with the devil, for you seek help by means inadequate of themselves to produce the required effect. You seek it by means resulting from diabolical agency, and it is never lawful to have recourse for aid to the arch-enemy of God or to his instruments.

"This is all very fine talk," replies the superstitious sinner, "but it does not prevent these people from helping me. By their means I get back my lost property, or am healed of my maladies."

Of course they help you, but it is through the intervention of the devil. Of course you recover your health, but, alas! At the penalty of eternal death of your soul! Which of these will you choose? Is there not a God in heaven, who can help you just as well, and even better? Is there no saint or friend of God through whose intercession you can recover your lost property or regain your health? Have you not a church in which you can pray to our Lord and his Blessed Mother, beseeching help in your necessities and resignation to the Divine Will in all things? Do you regard the devil as a better helper, physician and benefactor than the God of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, from whom we have the infallible promise "Ask and you shall receive"?

"Oh, yes," you return; "I might pray for a long time before being helped so effectually. I have prayed and got others to pray for me; I have had Masses said; but what have I gained

thereby? My lost property is not yet recovered; my child is still sick; my son, my husband is still away from me, and I do not know where he is.” Well, have patience. I believe that such is really the case with you, but what then? “Well, there is nothing else for me to do but to go to these people, and they will help me for a trifling sum!” Oh, my dear friend, do not say that. If you are a good Christian you must understand that the price you pay for such things is the loss of the grace of God, the destruction of your immortal souls. The chief thing to be considered in our afflictions is the will of God. If our Lord has not heard your prayer, he knows the reason why. He knows that that cure, that restoration of your lost treasure, that knowledge of hidden things, would not be good for your soul. A faithful Christian must believe and trust in the wisdom and goodness of God, as the little child trusts the good father who takes away from him the glittering knife that delights his eye, but threatens his life—the good father who holds him in his tender arms whilst the surgeon performs a painful operation which will give him future health and prolonged days.

Ratify, then, and renew the contract you made with your God in holy Baptism: “I renounce the devil, and all his works and all his pomps.” If Satan were to offer you the whole world and all its wealth, as he formerly did to our Saviour, saying:

“All these will I give thee if, falling down, thou wilt adore me!” reply to him, as Christ did: “Begone, Satan, for it is written:

The Lord thy God thou shalt adore, and him only shalt thou serve.”

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