

LETTER XV

The Devil, Arcanum of Intoxication

Quotations for Reflection

One ought not to occupy oneself with evil, other than in keeping a certain distance and a certain reserve, if one wishes to avoid the risk of paralysing the creative élan and a still greater risk—that of furnishing arms to the powers of evil. One can grasp profoundly, i.e. intuitively, only that which one loves. Love is the vital element of profound knowledge, intuitive knowledge. Now, one cannot love evil. Evil is therefore unknowable in its *essence*. (page 403)

Is it not a diagnosis and prognosis of the whole history of the human race that at the same time that Moses received the revelation of the Word at the summit of the mountain, the people at the foot of the mountain made and worshipped a golden calf? (page 409)

To be silent is more than to keep things secret; it is more even than to guard oneself from profaning the holy things to which a respectful silence is owed. To be silent is, above all, *the great magical commandment of not engendering demons* through our arbitrary will and imagination; it is the task of silencing arbitrary will and imagination. (page 409)

Because care for the rights and well-being of the poor is an integral part of the very essence of tradition—Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu and humanist. (page 410)

The scale of temptation therefore corresponds to that of spiritual advancement: temptation is progressively spiritualised as man becomes more spiritual. The temptations of “Principalities and Powers” (*archai kai exousiai*) which the spiritually advanced have to face are incomparably more subtle than those for a beginner. (page 412)

Lastly, on the threshold of the All—God himself—there is the last temptation, by way of the void: the “dark night of the soul”, of which St. John of the Cross speaks, signifying simultaneously union with God or, rather, the despair of nothing—complete and supreme nihilism. (page 414)

This law is of such universality that Jesus Christ, also, had to face three temptations in the desert after the manifestation of the Holy Trinity at the time of the Baptism in the Jordan. The ladder of perfection therefore entails that of temptation. And just as the former signifies progress from the gross to the subtle, so does the latter signify an analogous progress. In other words, inspiration is followed or accompanied by counter-inspiration. (page 414)

“*A vision of the holy ones is not turbulent...it comes so quietly and gently that instantly joy and gladness and courage arise in the soul...*” — Saint Athanasius (page 415)

“When, therefore, you have a vision (or experience some inspiration*) and are afraid, if then the fear is taken from you immediately and in its place comes ineffable joy and contentment; and courage and recovery of strength and calmness of thought and the other things I have mentioned, and stout-heartedness, too, and love of God, then be of good cheer and pray—*for your joy and your soul's tranquility* betoken the holiness of Him who is present...” — Saint Athanasius (page 415)

“...there is a great difference between the visions of God and those of the evil one. For the effect of the latter is not like that of the former: those of Satan *result in dryness of spirit*, in a tendency to self-esteem, to accept and make much of visions; and in no degree whatever do they produce the gentleness of humility, and love of God.” — Saint John of the Cross (page 416)

For Hermeticism is in no way exclusiveness, but *depth*. Therefore all that which is deep belongs to it. It is not “legitimate initiation” which constitutes the chain—or rather the flow—of the tradition—but rather the *niveau* and *authenticity* of spiritual experience and the *depth* of thought that it comprises. (page 418)

You cannot engender a “demon of pure love” or an “*egregore* of universal love” because the quality of will and imagination required to this end is not held together as a formation centred in itself, but forms an alliance—one of “radiating movement”—with the activity of the world of spiritual hierarchies. The psychic and mental energy of love would never give rise to the formation of an individualised psychic or “astral” entity; it would immediately put itself wholly at the disposal of the celestial hierarchies, saints, and God. Therefore, although one can certainly engender demons, one cannot engender artificial Angels. (page 419)

Consecrated water is not water which has become a depot for the beneficial force of consecration, but rather it has been rendered susceptible to the presence of heaven. (page 421)

Just as darkness gives way to the presence of light, so does evil give way before the presence of good. (page 421)

Light drives out darkness. This simple truth is the practical key to the problem of how to combat demons. A demon perceived, i.e. on whom the light of consciousness is thrown, is already a demon rendered impotent. (page 421)

Satan does not accuse Job of sin committed but of a potential sin. And he sets to work so as to actualise it. (page 423)

We certainly have the force to generate demons but that the use of this force will render the generator a slave of the generated. (page 426)