

AGAINST THE NEO-GNOSTIC TOLL HOUSE MYTH

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

"...a soul which departs from the body does not fall under the tyranny of the devil....For if while the soul dwells in the body the devil cannot bring violence upon it, it is obvious that when it departs he likewise cannot." (HOMILY TWO ON LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN, P.G. 48:984).

SAINT ISAAC THE SYRIAN

"The demons, though they are extremely polluted, are not concealed from one another in their orders; howbeit they do not see the two orders [human souls and angels] that are above them." (HOMILY 67)

SAINT DIADOCHOS OF PHOTIKI

The Grace of God, on the other hand, dwells in the very depths of the soul...and it is not perceptible to the demons." (ON SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE)

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SAINT JOHN CASSIAN

"But the demons cannot possibly come near to those thoughts which have not yet come forth from the inmost recesses of the soul. And the thoughts too, which they suggest, whether they are actually or in a kind of way embraced, are discovered by them not from the nature of the soul itself, i.e., that inner inclination which lies concealed so to speak in the very marrow, but from the motions and signs given by the outward man." (FIRST CONFERENCE OF ABBA SERENEUS, para.15).

SAINT ANTONY THE GREAT

"We ought not to fear the demons or even Satan himself, for he is a liar and speaks not a word of truth...and with him are placed the demons his fellows, like serpents and scorpions to be trodden underfoot by us Christians...and let us not fear his visions seeing that they themselves are deceptive....Doubtless they appear; but in a moment disappear again, hurting none of the faithful....Wherefore it is unfitting that we should fear them on account of these things; for through the Grace of Christ all their practices are in vain.

`From the beginning the devil is a manslayer and a father of vice' (Jn.8:44); while we, though this is so, are alive, and spend our lives all the more opposing him; it is plain that they [the demons] are powerless. For place is no hindrance to their plots, nor do they look on us as friends that they should spare us; nor are they lovers of good that they should amend. But on the contrary they are evil, and nothing is so much sought after by them as wounding those who love virtue and fear God. But since they have no power to affect anything, they do nought but threatenIf they had power, they would permit none of us Christians to live....But since they can do nothing, they inflict the greater wounds on themselves; for they can fulfil none of their threats. Next this ought to be considered

that we may be in no fear of them....But the demons as they have no power are like actors on the stage...from which they ought rather to be despised as showing their weakness." ... "But if the demons had power not even against the swine, much less have they any over men formed in the image of God. So then we ought to fear God only, and despise the demons, and be in no fear of them." (LIFE).

ST ATHANASIUS THE GREAT

"Whence it is quite fitting that the Lord suffered this death. For thus being lifted up He cleared the air of the malignity both of the devil and of demons of all kinds." (THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD OF GOD, para.25).

SAINT JOHN THE SOLITARY

"The devil cannot touch the nature of the soul, nor can he draw nigh it at all to harm it...

"The devil does not touch or see the soul, but the members of the body only...and by harming one of the members he disturbs the thoughts which are active within them. For indeed, if he could draw nigh the soul so as to harm it, then he WOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO HARM IT AFTER IT DEPARTED FROM THE BODY, BUT THIS HE WOULD HAVE TO DO WHILE BEING UNABLE TO SEE IT AND HAVING NO POWER OVER IT, BECAUSE HIS POWER EXTENDS ONLY AS FAR AS THE BODY." (SIXTH DIALOGUE WITH THOMASIOS).