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PHILIP ROUSSEAU

modern school. Interior purity, for example, could acquire in Cassian's text a limited, almost clinical definition: could become little more than the imagination's freedom from sexual embarrassment.¹ The oil in the maiden's lamp (referring to Mt. xxv. 1-13) was for Cassian nothing greater than an absence of 'mentis titillatio', and of 'libidinis incitamenta'—a quality, in other words, still entirely sexual in character.² Yet when Cassian turned to the question of 'mortifying one's members' (at first sight an 'exterior' concern), he interpreted 'members' as the vices themselves, rather than any particular bodily sense.³

Stark distinctions, therefore, were qualified by Cassian; and this was achieved by more than a mere confusion of terminology. Discussing the question of just how close to the inner self demons were able to approach, he let slip some interesting comments on the relation between body and soul. Diabolical possession comes about 'nec enim per aliquam animae deminutionem, sed per corporis debilitatem'. The 'imundus spiritus' makes its dwelling 'in illis membris in quibus vigor animae continetur . . . eisque inportabile atque immensum pondus inponens obscuritate terribissima intellectuales eius obruit atque intercipit sensus'.⁴ The soul is not conceived as something shut away: the very limbs are enlivened by a 'vigor animae'. There is an inner citadel of the personality that will remain untouched by the influence of evil spirits; but all activity depends on the proper functioning of the senses and of the whole body. As for that inner citadel, the anxiety that is here at once unfolded and assuaged is not concerned with a merely spatial question of how far the demons may be 'inside', but centres much more on the fear that the self as subject is liable to destruction, capable of being supplanted at its very root by the forces of evil. Cassian denied such a possibility. The demons can only mount a watchful siege upon a man. Although invisible, they are exterior in this vital sense: they must wait upon visible signs that will reveal an inner weakness: 'Nulli dubium est quod possint spiritus immundi cogitationum nostrarum adtingere qualitates, sed indicia eas sensibilibus forinsecus colligentes, id est aut ex nostris dispositionibus aut ex verbis et studiis in quae propensus nos perspexerint inclinari'.⁵ In this passage the inner soul is inseparably involved in the visible body; and the merely invisible is not automatically identified with the intimately personal.⁶

Flesh and spirit are never sharply divided along interior-exterior lines. They represent not so much elements in man's structure as poles of activity at odds within him. That flesh and spirit are in conflict is a fact to be accepted, as far as man's present condition is concerned: it is the fruit

¹ *Con.*, xii. 2.

² *Con.*, xxii. 6.

³ *Con.*, xii. 2—a justifiable interpretation of Colossians iii. 5.

⁴ *Con.*, vii. 12.

⁵ *Con.*, vii. 15.

⁶ Cassian followed Evagrius here: Marsili, *Giovanni Cassiano*, 97. For other examples in the East, see *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Macarius 3 (PG., lxx. 261) and the *Vita prima* of Pachomius, 19 (ed. Halkin, p. 13).

