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**A Treatise of Specters**

**Bromhall, Thomas**

**[S.l.], 1658**

The Opinions and Arguments of the Sadduces, and Epicures [...]

[urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-96270](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-96270)



*The Opinions and Arguments of the Sadduces, and Epicures; by which they would prove, that the Angels and Devils do not appear unto Men; Confuted.*

**M**Any there have been at all times, and in all Ages, which have impugned, and stiffly denied the Apparitions of Devills, Angells, and Spirits: But some have done it in one sort, and some in another. For there be some, who (to ridde themselves altogether from the question and disputation, that might be made concerning particular and speciall matters, which are often alledged, in regard of the Apparition of Specters) do bend themselves against them all in generall; That is by cutting off the root, and undermining the foundation of a Principle well grounded, they may the more easily cause the overthrow and downfall of all that which dependeth upon the same.

They deny therefore, that there are any Angells, or Devils at all: or any Spirits, severed and abstracted from a corporall substance or body: to the end that by consequence they may infer and conclude, that there are not likewise any Specters, nor Apparitions of Spirits. Such were the *Sadduces*, as we may read in the Acts of the Apostles; and the *Epicures*; and the greatest part of the *Peripateticks*; and all sorts of *Atheists* whatsoever. Of which last, there are at this day more huge numbers abounding within this our Realm of *France*, then would be tolerated. These men would not stick to affirm (if they durst, and were it not for fear of the Magistrate) that it is free for men to abandon themselves to all kind of iniquity, impiety, and dissolute living: for so do they murmur, and mumble, when they are alone and by themselves; that there is nor either God, or any Spirits at all, good, or evill: nor yet any Hell, where the Souls of men should suffer any pains or punishment; but that they dye together with the body: And that all whatsoever is said or alledged, touching Hell-torments, is nothing but a vain and superstitious toy, and fable; onely to make babes and Children afraid: and to wrap and tye the greatest persons of the World in certain bonds of a Religious superstition: for so are the words of *Lucretius*, in this behalf. \* And I do believe, that they do often say in their hearts, that which *Pythagoras*, the *Samian*, is

alleged in *Ovid*, to have said to the Inhabitants of *Crotona* in *Italy*,

*Why stand you thus in fear of Styx, and such vain dreamings,  
Of Manes, and of Spirits, which are nought else but leasings?*

Certainly he that should take upon him, to instruct these *Athiests*, should but lose his time: because they will admit of no reasons, no not of those that are meerly naturall. For seeing they do not believe him which hath the command and rule of Nature, how can they yield any credit or belief unto those reasons that are drawn from nature it self?

Other persons there are, who, being more religious, and honest men then those former; yet have no lesse denyed the essence of Angels, Devils, and Spirits: Howbeit they have been of this opinion: that by reason both of the distance between them and us, and of the difficulty of appearing in a humane body; they cannot possibly present themselves unto us.

Others also there have been, who have referred all that which is spoken of the vision of Spirits, unto the naturall and perpetuall depravation of the humane senses. Such were the *Scepticks*, and the *Aporreticks*, who were the followers of the Philosopher *Pirrhon*: as also the *second and third Academy*, who held, *That the senses, were they never so sound, could not imagine any thing, but falsely and untruly.*

Again, some others, with more appearance of reason then the *Scepticks*, have affirmed; that abundance of Melancholly, and Choller adust, Frenzy, Feavers, and the debility or corruption of the senses (be it naturally, or by accident) in any body, may make them to imagine many things which are not. And they do infer, that such as happen to be attainted with these maladies, do think that they have seen Devils, and other such like Specters. They adde moreover, that the fear, superstition, and credulity of many is such, that they will most commonly suffer themselves to be drawn into a belief and perswasion of that, which is quite contrary to truth.

To make short; Others there be, wise enough and fine conceited: yet neverthelesse (being great mockers, and incredulous, because they themselves did never happen to see any Vision, nor have ever heard or touched any supernaturall thing) they have been of this opinion; that nothing could appear unto men, that exceeded or went beyond the course of nature. And of this number, *Lucian* was one: who (being also as great an Infidell as any could be) said: I believe no part of all these Apparitions: because I onely amongst you all did never see any of them. And if I had seen of them, assure your selves, I would believe them, as you do. Notwithstanding for all this, he opposed himself against all the famous and renowned Philosophers of his time, and held argument against them, though (as himself confessed) they were the chiefeft  
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and most excellent in all kind of knowledg and learning. And he was not ashamed to stand onely upon his own bare conceit and opinion: impudently maintaining, without any reason at all, against them that were as wise, if not more wise then himself, and more in number: that forsooth nothing at all, whatsoever was said or alledged touching Specters, ought to be admitted or believed. But what reasons I pray you doth he bring, to confirm his saying? Truly none at all: but that onely of his own absolute and uncontrouled authority, he will draw to his incredulity, all others, whom he seeth to be assured and settled in their opinion: Notwithstanding, that they are certainly resolved of the truth, by the exterior senses, with which they have perceived and known that to be true, which so constantly they do maintain and defend. But how can it possibly be, that a man should think, without any shew of reason, by incredulity and mockery onely, to confute and overthrow that, which hath been ever of all men, and in all ages, received and admitted? Certainly, this is the fashion and guise of mockers, and scorers, that that which they cannot deny, nor yet have a will to confesse, they will find the means to put it off with a jest and laughter: and so think secretly to insinuate themselves into the minds and conceits of their hearers; especially, such as look not, nor have a regard to the truth and substance of a thing, but onely to the outward shadow, and grace of words and glorious speeches. Such a scorner needeth not any great knowledge: because it is sufficient for him to be superficially skillfull in any thing; so that he can with a kind of grave and smiling grace, shift off the reasons and arguments of those, whose knowledge, and learning, is so exceeding far beyond his, as during his whole life, he will never attain unto the like. Thus did *Machiavel* carry himself: who amongst the learned, and men of skill and judgment, knew well how to make his profit of his scoffes, and pleasant grace in jesting; whereby he would many times strike them out of countenance, in the sight of them that heard him; whereas, if he had come to dispute with them, by lively reasons, and solid Arguments, he would at the very first blow have been overthrown and confounded. But in the end he discovered himself sufficiently, and was reputed of all men, no other then a Scoffer, and an Atheist, as *Paulus Jovius* testifieth of him.

But we will cease to speak any further of him, of *Lucian*, and of those of their humour, and will return to our matter, touching Specters: the which, that we may the better explain (now that we have briefly declared the diversity of opinions, of those that insist upon the contrary) we will answer unto each of them in order, as they have been propounded. And first, as touching the Sadduces, the Epicures, the Peripateticks, we will severally answer their Arguments which they object against us: Next, we will remove those difficulties, which are objected, and shew how the Angels and Devils may take upon them a body. Afterwards, we will shew and discover unto the Scepticks, that the humane senses are

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not so faulty and uncertain, as they would make men believe. And last of all, (to the intent we may leave nothing behind) we will not forget to shew, by what maladies and infirmities the senses may be hurt and troubled: and the Imaginative power of man wounded and changed: so as all that which is supposed to be seen, is meerly false and untrue.

To come first of all to the Sadduces: It is most certain, that of all men they were the most grosse and carnall: and did not believe that any thing was spirituall: but they did Imagine all to be corporall: because they said, that the *Humane Understanding* doth alwaies work with the *Phantasme*, and with the thing *Imagined*. And it appeareth, that in dreaming of any thing whatsoever, we do alwaies imagine it to be corporall; whereupon they conclude, that all things are corporall: and therefore that even God also is a corporal Substance, which is the greatest absurdity and Blasphemy that can be imagined in the world. For if we should restrain God into a body, we must also make him subject to a body: (so saith *Saint John Damascen*) which, in a word, is to restrain and shorten the power and omnipotency of God: the which being infinitely above all substances, both corporall and incorporall, is not subject to their Category. The reason that moved them to believe that God was corporall, was a place of *Moses* (for they did not receive nor admit of any Scriptures, but the five Books of *Moses*; as saith *Origen*) wherein it is written. *That God made Moses to stay in the Cave of a Rock or Mountain: and putting his hand upon him, did shew him his hinder parts, not suffering him to see his face.* And therefore in regard that *Moses* attributeth unto God a face, a hand, and other parts, they conclude that God hath a body. Of the same opinion also was *Tertullian*, (as witnesseth *Saint Augustine*, writing to *Optatus*) and the *Bogomiles*, being certain Heretiques of *Bulgary*: who thought that God was as we are (so writeth *Enthymus*): and that from his two eyes, out of his brain did issue two beams; the one called the *Sunne*, and the other, the *Holy Spirit*: which is a most blasphemous and intolerable error.

Now the occasion, why the Sadduces did so eagerly defend and maintain, that God had a body; was, because they would deny all incorporall substances: to which effect they thus argued. If God (say they) have created any substances, he created them to his own Image and likeness: and therefore when he made man he said, *That he made him according to his own Image*: shewing thereby, that he was of a corporall substance: because that Man, whom he formed to the pattern of his own face, is corporall. And if God have made nothing but what is corporall: It followeth, that the Angells and Devils which are said to be Spirits, are nothing but meer fables: and that there be not any Souls, or spirits separated from a corporall substance: and by consequence, that the Soul of man is mortall, as the body; and hath no need to be reunited thereunto by the generall resurrection,

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But it is easy to answer them ; by denying plainly, that God is corporall, or hath any body. For albeit, the holy Scripture doth attribute unto God, hands, feet, face, eyes, and other parts of a body : yet this must be understood spirituallly ; and by those corporall and bodily members, we must imagine the spirituall vertues of God (according as saith *S. Gregory*) : as, by his *eyes*, we must understand his *fore-sight and his knowledg* ; to the which all things are open, and from which nothing is hidden and concealed : By his *hand*, is meant, his *Almighty power and puissance* : By his *face*, the *plenitude and fullnesse of his glory*. By his *liader parts*, his *glory* is shadowed, as under the veil of some certain form and similitude. And whereas they say, that the *Understanding* doth work with the *Imagination* ; and that we do Imagine God to be a corporall substance : This hath no reason, nor any appearance of truth at all ; but is an error, common to them, with the *Epicures* : to the which we will answer anon. And as touching the *Angels* : I do greatly marvell how the *Saduces* can deny the being of them ; seeing that *Moses* in many places doth make mention of them, and of their *Apparition*. We may therefore very well say of them, that they use the *Books of Moses*, as men use their *Stirrups*, in lengthening and shortning them, at their pleasures. This is the reason, why *Justine Martyr* did not reckon them in the number of the *Jews* (and that worthily) but reputed them as *Hereticks* : not allowing them any place in the *Jewish Church*, by reason of the fond and absurd opinions which they held, not onely of God, but also of the *Angels*, *Devils*, and *Souls of men*, which they affirmed to be mortall. But as concerning this latter point, we shall speak more hereafter. Let us now consider the *Arguments of the Epicures*.

The first error of the *Epicures* is, that God hath a body ; as the *Saduces* did believe likewise. And their first Argument was, That nature it self (forsooth) did teach and admonish us, to believe, that both God and all Celestiall essences were corporall ; for two reasons : The former was, because the Gods are not figured in any other, then in a humane form. And the second, because whether it be in sleeping, or in waking, when we dream or imagine of the Gods, no other form doth present it self unto our *Imaginations*, but a humane shape : And therefore they conclude, that the Gods are in figure like unto men. But unto this Argument, *Cicero* answereth sufficiently ; That such humane shape, and form, is attributed unto the Gods by the invention of men : and that either it proceedeth from the wisdom of the *Antients* ; who thought thereby they should the more easily draw the spirits and minds of the ignorant, to the knowledg of spirituall, and supernatural things ; and that they should the sooner bring and reduce them into the way to live well and vertuously : Or else, that the same had its beginning and first footing from a blind superstition : which doth most easily allure men to adore those gods which are portrayed and carved in a form most pleasing and agreeable unto men ; Or else, that it is but a fiction of *Poets and Painters* ; who have alwaies been audacious

to fain and devise any thing, rather than that which should be according to truth and verity. And this last point may well serve to answer that, which the *Epicures* say; that, be it in sleeping, or in waking, the gods do not present themselves unto us, in any other than a humane form: For this is certain, that by the portraiture and pictures which we see of the gods, in those forms which are common and familiar unto us; we do imagine (though falsely) that which may resemble unto us, the same which we have seen to be painted. Insomuch, that *Jupiter* seemeth unto us, to have a face and countenance terrible, with his hair black, and hanging backward; as *Phidias* did engrave him. And *Minerva* had her eyes blew, or of an azure colour; as *Homer* describeth her. *Mercury* was painted like a young man, having his eyes alwaies open, as one that was ever waking: with bright yellow hair, and a yellow down upon his chin and cheeks, as if it did but newly begin to frizzle or to curl. *Venus* had her eyes delicate and wanton, and her locks of Gold yellow. *Juno* had grosse and thick eyes, rising up towards her head, like unto the eyes of an Oxe. And so generally were the rest of the Gods painted by the Gentiles, in divers forms and fashions. Notwithstanding, all this proceeded of nothing else, but from the error of our *Imagination*, which suffereth it self to be deceived and seduced, by the painting, which imprinted in it a kind of false notion. I say, a notion: because the ignorant common sort of people, is perswaded of the same, and suffereth it to take place in their mind, or *Understanding*: which is as easy also to be deceived, as is their *Imagination*. But a man of *Wisdom* and *Judgment*, (who hath his understanding more clear and open) is not easily therewithall seduced: but notwithstanding all paintings and fictions, his *Intellect*, or *understanding power* pierceth through the imagination (as the Sun pierceth or shineth through the Clouds): and spreading it self, with her light, doth easily believe in a spirituall manner, that God and the Angels are *Spiritual*.

The second Argument of the *Epicures*, touching the humane body of God; was, that God took upon him that form, which was, or could be imagined, to be the most beautifull in the whole World. And they say, that the humane form, or shape, is of all others, the most goodly and excellent: And therefore we ought to think that God is carnall and corporall, as men are. Hereunto needeth no answer to be made: because the consequence of their Argument is not good: viz. That God should retain unto himself the figure of a man, because the same is the most excellent of all other creatures in the World. For the Divinity of God, neither is, nor can be, in any corporal substance: but it is an incorporeall and spirituall essence, which hath nothing common with that substance which is proper unto these Earthly Creatures.

The third and last Argument of these Philosophers, is a Gradation or heaping up of Syllogisms: which kind of Argument, the

Greeks

Greeks call a *Sorites*: and they frame it in this sort; It is held and confessed of all, that God, and all other celestially powers, are exceedingly happy: But no person can be happy, without vertue: And vertue cannot be present in any, without reason: and reason can be in none, but in the figure and shape of man. Therefore it must be granted, that the Gods, which have the use of reason, have the form of man also. But the whole frame of this Argument may soon and easily be dissolved, by denying, that reason can be in no other, then in a humane shape: For both God and the Angels, who have a divine and spirituall understanding, have the use of reason, notwithstanding, that they be not of a corporall substance. And reason in man, commeth not of the humane body: but from the Soul of man, which is Spiritual and Divine, made unto the likenesse of God, and capable of reason, of prudence, and of Wisedome.

Now, whereas it might be objected to the *Epicures*; That in making their Gods to have a humane body, they do therein make them subject to death and dissipation. To avoid this absurdity, they do tumble into a greater; affirming, that their body is as a body; and their blood, as blood; not having any thing, but the lineaments and proportion of a man, and being exempted from all crassitude and thickenesse: which in a word, is as much as to say, that their gods were rather Idols of men, then very men; and rather framed by the pattern of men, then as men in truth and substance: which is a thing the most ridiculous that can be imagined.

But, will some say, to what purpose serveth all this, touching our matter of Specters? I have said before, that the *Sadduces* did mainrain God to have a body, to the end they might the better deny the appearing of Specters; which are substances without a body. Also the *Epicures* made their Gods to have bodies; that so they might hold them in the Heavens idle, and doing nothing: and by consequence might deny their Apparition upon Earth. For as touching Devils or Spirits, they believed there were not any: but did confound them all in the number of their Gods. And, that they did but make a jest of Specters, appeareth by the speech of *Cassius* in *Plutarch*: and in that that *Celsus* (half an *Epicure*) writing against the Christians, did deny them flatly and absolutely, (as is to be seen in *Origen*, who hath answered him) and did reprove the Christians, in that they would allow of any powers, or Spirits, contrary to the gods: supposing (according to his own saying, and opinion) that there were no Devills. Besides that, he made a mock and a jest of Angels, and of the Resurrection of the body: and generally of all those Apparitions, which were made, both in the Old and New Testament.

And now that we speak of contrary powers, it putteth me in remembrance of a speech of *Plutarch*, who reproveth *Chrysippus*, for that in this universall body of the World, so well ordained and framed, he should grant so great an inconvenience, (to wit) that there should be a kind of Devills afflicting and tormenting men, to the disturbance of the concord and harmony of the World:



Which being well ordained by the Author and maker thereof, ought not to be thought to bear or sustain any thing which should be incommodious to it self; and by lapse, and continuance of time, should work the confusion and destruction of the same. But it seemeth, that *Plutarch* reprehended *Chrysippus*, upon a desire and humour of contradiction, rather then moved upon any just cause, or matter of truth. For the Devils do not work any dammage or inconvenience to the World, being bridled and restrained by the hand and power of God. And if they do torment men, or tempt them, it is to exercise them, or to manifest the glory and Justice of God; of the which they are sometimes made the executioners. And as in each Common-Wealth, well instituted there be executioners ordained, for the punishment of Malefactors, and such as trouble and disturb the publick peace, and good of the Common-Weal, and yet the universal body of the Common-weal is not thereby offended, or endamaged; but to the contrary, rather it receiveth much more profit and commodity. Even so God hath placed, and left here below in this World, Devils and wicked Spirits, to be as tormenters and executioners to wicked men: that so his Justice might shine the more glorious, to the comfort of the godly, and of his Elect, that live in the love and fear of him.

But to come again unto the *Epicures*: It is most certain, that they were no other, then the followers of nature: and that onely so far as things did fall under their outward senses. And if one should alledge unto them, that any Specters, Images, and Visions, had presented themselves; they would refer the same, for the most part, to the concourse and perpetuall flux of their *Atomes*: or to some other like reasons; the which we hold it not amisse to discover and decipher at large, as we have drawn them out of *Cicero*, or of *Lucretius*. All Images (say they) which do externally present themselves unto our senses, either they are *visible*, or *invisible*; If they be *Invisible*, either they are *created in the Ayre*, or *in our own minds and conceits*. As touching those made in the Ayre; it is not any strange thing, or abhorring from reason, that in the same should be engendred certain voices; like as we see it is naturall, that cold commeth from the Rivers; ebbing and flowing, from the Sea; and heat, from the Sun. And it may be, that some voice, being spread abroad within the Valleys, doth not onely rebound back again, to the place from whence it came; but doth dilate and scatter it self here and there, throughout the Ayre, as do the sparks that mount up from the fire. So that for one voice there are many engendred; which running through the empty Ayre, do enter within the Ears of those, that knew nothing of the naturall voice; and do put them into a misconceit, and fond opinion, that they have heard either some of the *Fayries*, or *Satyres*, or *Nymphes*, playing and sporting amidst the Woods.

As concerning those that are bred in the *mind*; They say, that for the innumerable course of *Atomes*; all whatsoever we do dream or think of, commeth incontinently into the spirit or mind, and sometimes passeth by Visions and Images into the bodily Eyes.

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But if the Images be *visible*; either they are reverberated and beaten back, from the *Chryſtall and transparent Ayre*, exceeding clear in her *ſuperficies*; or they come of the *Spoils and ſcales of naturall things*. Touching the *Ayre*; That it may of it ſelf caſt ſome kind of Image, having power to appear, they prove it in this ſort; All Ayre that is *Chryſtalline or tranſparent*, hath a kind of refraction, as appeareth by the mirrour (whereof Looking Glaſſes are made and poliſhed) and by the water, and by a thick and darkned Ayre. And this do the *Catopticks* themſelves teach in their principles; Now (by the compariſon and ſimilitude of the mirrour, and the water) all Ayre which hath a refraction, doth of it ſelf yield ſome certain form. And therefore it is not any thing ſtrange if in an Ayre a man may ſee certain forms and Images. And they do bring alſo this compariſon. Even as the Tapeſtry hangings in a Theater, or a large wide Hall, do caſt abroad round about, their naturall colour, where they find an Ayre oppoſed againſt them; and the more that the beams of the Sun do beat or ſhine upon them, the more bright and ſhining luſtre they carry with them; and ſeem to have caſt off and left their colour, in the ſame place, which is directly in oppoſition againſt them; So is it moſt certain, that the Ayre may of it ſelf caſt abroad certain forms and figures; the which look by how much the more they be made clear, by the light which doth bring and tye them to our object, ſo much the more comprehenſible ſhall they be unto our ſight.

In brief, concerning the ſpoils and ſcales caſt from naturall things, of which, in their opinion, Images ſhould be engendred. They do make this argument; The Caterpillars (ſay they) do leave their ſpoils in the hedges or buſhes, like unto themſelves; ſo do the Serpents among the thorns or ſtones; and the little creatures, at the time of their birth, do leave behind them their after-burthen; which is a little thin and ſlender ſkin, which they bring with them, from their dammes belly. Why therefore may there not be left or caſt from the bodies of naturall things, certain thin and ſubtil forms, or Images, proceeding from them as well, as a little ſkin and the after-burthen doth remain of the ſuperfluity of little Creatures? But all theſe Arguments may very eaſily be diſſolved.

And firſt, as touching the voyces, which they ſay, may ſimply be created of the Ayre; I will not deny that. For it is moſt certain, that the voice, is a certain *beating and concuſſion of the Ayre, which falleth under the ſenſe of hearing*, (as is affirmed by the *Grammarians*.) And the matter of the voice (as ſaith *Galen*) is the *breath*, and reſpiration of the Lungs; but the form thereof is the *Ayre*, without the which, neither can it be underſtood, nor can it be called a voice. Beſides I will not deny, but that the ſounds are raiſed within the empty Ayre, be it either by the winds, or by ſome other externall cauſe. But to ſay, that the voyces, and the ſounds are naturall and adherent to the Ayre, as the Tide to the Sea; and coldneſſe to the Rivers; and heat to the Sun; It would then follow, that

without any externall cause at all, both the voice, and the senses should be created in the Ayre, and should perpetually adhere unto the Ayre, as the Tide doth to the Sea; and cold to the waters; and heat unto the Sun. But so it is, that the winds are not alwaies in the Ayre: and the sounds and voices are external things, coming into the Ayre, by the means of some other subject; the which is nothing to neither in the Sea, nor in the Rivers, nor in the Sun: because that in the Seas the Tide; and cold in the waters; and heat in the Sun, are unseparably, and continually. And there is great difference between *Accidents* that are *Separable*, and those that are *Inseparable*. For the separable Accident as the *Voyces* and the *Sounds* in the Ayre, may be abstracted, and drawn from the substance of the Ayre, and yet the Ayre shall neither perish, nor be the sooner altered thereby; But ebbing and flowing cannot be taken from the Sea, but the nature thereof must needs be changed; Nor can the heat be separated from the Sun, but that he must then lose his light; Neither can the cold be severed from the Rivers, but that the quality and nature of the water must be changed; which cannot possibly be; because naturally water is cold. And these three Accidents, are inseparably knit to those three substances, no lesse, then blacknesse is to the Raven, and whitenesse to the Swan. Moreover, it is a far greater foolery, to say, that of voices articulated and knit together, the voices themselves should be bred and engendred in the Ayre: For that is not onely against the nature of the Ayre, but against all order established in the World. Neither is it to any purpose, to alledge for an instance, the voice of an *Eccho*: the which being carried in the Ayre, doth spread it self, and scattereth (as a spark from the fire) here and there, not onely towards the party that made and dispersed the sound, but to some other places likewise. For the voice of the *Eccho*, is engendred of the voice of the party, and not of the Ayre, and is dispersed (as themselves confesse) by the speech of the man, from whom it took its Originall and first beginning. Neither will I easily grant unto them, that the voice of the *Eccho* doth disperse it self on all sides, without losing it self, or being extinguished. For it is a thing very notorious, and sufficiently proved, that if the *Eccho* be dispersed into another place, then that from whence it first received her voice, she is no more discerned or understood as the voice of a man, but onely as a confused and uncertain sound; which ranging through the Vallies, cannot be discerned, but onely for a resounding noise, and not otherwise. Now as concerning those Images, or similitudes, which the *Epicures* alledge to be created in the *thought* or *conceit*: saying, that the mind of man doth refer unto the eyes, whatsoever it dreameth, or thinketh on; and that by means of the abundance or concurrence of the *Atomes*. I do make them the same answer, which *Cicero* yielded them; that if the mind and the eyes do so symbolize and agree together in operations, that whatsoever the mind shall imagine and conceive, the eye may presently see; It must needs then follow, that some things shall present themselves

selves to our eyes and sight, which never were in being, nor ever  
 can be. For I may dream, or think of a *Scylla*, a *Chimera*, a *Hippo-*  
*centaure*, and such like conceited fictions, which never were, nor  
 can be. And I may fain unto my self; in my mind, strange *Mon-*  
*sters*, and *Anicks*; such as Painters do many times make, which  
 neither are things, nor can possibly be. To be short, if this Argu-  
 ment of the *Epicures* were true; it must needs be, that all things  
 whatsoever the mind presenteth, should be of a certainty: and  
 they should fall so subject to our sight, as we might plainly and  
 sensibly see them: the which is the greatest folly, that can possi-  
 bly be imagined. Neither can they defend themselves with the  
 continuall concourse of their *Atomes*: which (they say) do unces-  
 santly bring certain Images into the mind, and into the eyes of men.  
 For, be it, that we should confesse, that their *Atomes* do slide into  
 the mind of man: how can they conclude thereof, that they de-  
 scend into the sight; nay, how can they descend; but that even by  
 their own reasons, their ignorance and sottishnesse may be disco-  
 vered. For, if their *Atomes* do enter into the mind, it must needs  
 be then by that means, that they be *Invisible*; and that they do  
 fly up and down very closely, and subtilly (as the very word doth  
 also import.) Now if they fly *invisibly* in the mind; how can they  
 of themselves so readily make any thing *visible* and apt to be seen?  
 Certainly, to make their *Atomes* visible and corporall, there must  
 be of necessity, beforehand, a great concurrence and huge heap of  
 them drawn together; which cannot be suddenly done, but will  
 require a great time. Now in the mean while that these *Invisible*  
*Atomes* shall be a gathering, and getting together into the mind,  
 they will be flitting and flying away some other where, as soon as  
 the mind (which never retaineth one thing very long) hath put  
 them out of remembrance. So that by this means they have not  
 any leisure to form themselves *visible* to the eyes of the body;  
 but they return back again, even as they came at first, *Invisi-*  
*ble*.

Now let us proceed, and passe on to those Images, which (say  
 the *Epicures*) are reverberated from the *Ayre*, being clear and  
 transparant in her *superficies*. I do agree with them, that the *Cat-*  
*optike*, that is to say, the *Speculative*, (being one of the kinds of the  
*Art Optike*) doth hold, that the refraction, which is made of forms  
 (be it either in a mirrour in the *Ayre*, or in the water) commeth ei-  
 ther of the density and thicknesse of the mirrour, polished and made  
 bright, the which keepeth sight, that it doth not disperse and scat-  
 ter it self: whereas otherwise, if the mirrour were transparent, or  
 had any pores, whereby one might see through it, the sight would  
 disperse and scatter it self abroad: Or else it commeth of the  
 thicknesse of the *Ayre* next adjoyning: or of the humid and moist  
 concretion of the Water, which stayeth and limiteth the beams of  
 the eyesight. And that is the reason, why one may aswell see his  
 visage in the water, as in a mirrour or looking glasse; and so also  
 in the water of the Sea, when it is not troubled nor tossed with the  
 Winds,

Winds, but resteth calm and quiet; which *Virgil* testifieth in these Verses :

*Of late (upon the Shore) I stood, my Self beholding  
In waters of the Sea, no stormy winds then stirring.*

But what will they infer of this, which every man will confesse to be true and infallible? So it is, (say they) that the Ayre being clear in her *Superficies* (like as doth the mirrour or looking Glasse); so will it yield of it self, some form or figure. Let this also be granted them: And what of that? Forsooth they conclude, that therefore in the Ayre, a man may see figures and Images. But who seeth not, that this conclusion is ridiculous, and Sophisticall: For it doth not answer to the terms of their proposition: but simply carrieth away the Subject, without speaking of that, which is thereunto attributed, and which is the knot of the whole question. But I would know of the *Epicures*, how they can prove unto us, that by their *Atomes* the Ayre may naturally engender forms and Images of themselves, which should be *visible*: and, which should be moving and living, as the *Speeters* are. I do assure my self, that they have not any arguments so good, but they may as easily be dissolved and avoided, as was the former. But they will say, perhaps; that we see often in the Ayre *Comets*, *Fiery Flames*, and other *Prodigies*. True; this I will not deny; but these things (which they say are seen in the Ayre) do not take their originall neither of their *Atomes*, nor of the *Ayre*; but are engendred of the *vapours* dried up from the Earth, as it is well known by the writings of good Philosphers. And the Ayre is susceptible and capable of them, by reason of some emptinesse in it; which doth easily yield and give place, and receiveth that which is sent unto it from below. Besides it is very evident, that such figures and Images as are seen in the *Ayre*, have not any life in them, as have the true *Speeters*; the which also (the *Epicures* ought to shew by good reasons) to be carried to and fro, and to move themselves in the *Ayre*. For if they had attributed motion and stirring unto *Speeters*; and had proved, that naturally, without having any Soul or life, they might notwithstanding be seen wandring, and running hither and thither in our form, or in any other; and that they are not onely to be seen in all parts of the *Ayre*, but in all other places whatsoever; then this might have stood them in great stead; to have impugned the Apparition of *Speeters*, supernaturally, or against nature.

Moreover, if they will affirm, that the transparent and thick Ayre, receiving our figure by refraction, doth move it self as we do; and doth live and change from place to place, as we do; then must they also prove unto us, that the same should be a *Speeter*; and not the Image of the object opposed thereunto, the which vanisheth away as soon as the same doth absent it self from it.

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And seeing we are now in the discourse of Images, formed in a thick Ayre : It is to be understood, that their nature is to appear either by the *refraction* of our own naturall and proper form, or by *reflexion*. As touching their appearance by *refraction*, we have already spoken sufficiently : But as concerning those which are by *reflexion* ; It is most certain, that their property is to appear by another form then ours : namely, of some lightsome body, which groweth into the thick and grosse Ayre, in the humid and moist concretion of the same ; or into the Glasse of a mirrour, making a *reflexion* of that thing which is reverberated and beaten back again into our sight. Thus by way of reflexion may a man see within a looking-Glasse, those men which are walking and marching in the streets. And sometimes a man shall think that men are walking near the walls of his Chamber : which notwithstanding is nothing so ; but that onely there is a reflexion of those persons whom we see aloof, walking and going up and down. So likewise by way of reflexion, may a man see in the Heavens sometimes a second Sunne, the Image of the true Sun ; and so likewise of the Rainbow. Howbeit that this latter (as *Aristotle* would have it) is not any reflexion but a *relation* of the *Aspect* unto our eye-sight. But under his correction, that is not so : For if the Rainbow in the Heavens do not yield a reflexion to our sight, it would not be seen in the water, or in a looking Glasse, as it is, and as daily experience sheweth us. And this also may serve for a solution to that Argument of the *Epicures*, who by Comparison of the clothes of Tapistry, that imprint their colours in the wall opposed, would prove, that the Ayre may also cast any form or Image of it self. For the colours of the Rainbow, and of Tapistry-hangings, are for the most part lively colours, as Azure or Sky-colour, red, carnation, and green ; all which do naturally cast a great lustre, which may easily yield an impression upon any solid thing, and may reflect unto our eyes. And yet neverthelesse, I see not how this can be a good argument, to shew that the Ayre can engender forms or figures ; which may refer themselves to the eyes, as *Specters*, and not rather, as Colours.

Last of all, touching that which the *Epicures* affirm ; how, of the bodies of things do issue and remain certain Spoils : The same hath not any foundation upon naturall reason, or upon any apparance of truth. For, is there any likelihood, or probability, that if the creatures do leave behind them their after-burdens, or other such spoils, bereaved from them, in the places where they have been : That therefore the bodies (be they dead, or be they alive) do leave an Image, or impression of themselves, in their absence, after they are departed from those places ? It is most certain, that the bodies of any creatures, have not any thing in them, which either in their life-time, or after that their substance is perished, can be abstracted or separated from them. For otherwise, of one body there should be two made ; which were a strange thing, and altogether abhorring from nature. And were not

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## The Opinions, and Arguments

much different, either from the Fables of the *Poets*, who of a dead body, made the abstraction of a shadow, which they called the Image and Idoll thereof, (as is affirmed, both by *Sergius*, and *Lucian* and the *Commentator* upon *Homer*) or else from those fabulous and idle dreams of the *Rabbins*, and *Talmudists*, which had their *Nephes*, as saith the Author of *Zoar*. But the truth is, that those Creatures which do use to cast their spoils from them, do leave no other then a thin slender skin, which being superfluous, is no more remaining or abiding with the body: Howbeit, that it commeth from the body; as appeareth both by the after-burthens of all creatures (wherein the young ones being wrapped and enfolded in the bellies of their dams, yet in comming from thence, do easily and naturally cast them off) as also by the spoils of the Serpent, or Snake, and by the skins of the Silk-worms, and the Caterpillars; the which superfluities, are drawn and cast off particularly from these beasts or Creatures, as a mark to the one, to wit, the Silk-worms, and Caterpillars, that they do change from their former state, and to the other, namely the Serpents, to shew the poisons and ill hearbs and feeds, which they have eaten all the Winter, according as *Virgil* writeth of them.

These Arguments being thus finished: Let us now come to that which the *Epicures* affirm to be the cause why any should be touched and attainted with fear; when they see such Images and figures, which they affirm naturally to flit and fly up and down: We (say they) are affected and altered, according to the things which we see, and which are next unto us. As for example; we perceive, I know not what, salt humour being near the Sea; and in touching of Wormwood, and of Rue, we find a kind of bitterness: and when we are near a Smith, we feel our teeth to gnash, and to be set on edge, at the noise of his File, or Saw, wherewith he worketh. So likewise, when these Images and figures do present themselves unto us, we cannot possibly abide nor suffer them; but we find our selves altered and changed in our understanding; howbeit some more then other some. For like as there be certain seeds within the eyes of Cocks, which shining and shooting into the eyes of the Lions, do so strike and pierce their eye-lids, and do inflict upon them such pain and grief, that they are constrained to fly from them, being not able to abide or endure the sight of the Cock; So are there some men, who have their senses so apprehensive and subtil, that they cannot hold from being afraid, when they see such vain Images and figures before them.

But hereunto we must give them this answer; that the fear which men have by the sight of Specters or Spirits, commeth in regard that the things are unaccustomed and admirable to the bodily senses; and not from any secret seeds, which are contrary to our nature, and much lesse from any natural passion; such as that is, wherewith men are touched, that abide near the Sea, or those that see Rue or Wormwood, or do hear the noise of a Smiths file or saw. For if it were of any natural passion that this fear proceeded; then would  
not

not the party terrified, be so confounded and astonished even in the very powers of the Soul, as it is commonly seen that men are, at the sight of Specters or Spirits: but rather he should be onely moved by a certain *Antipathy* or abomination (as *Pomponatius* calleth it) and would onely abhor and fly from that which he so feareth. Besides, things that are supernatural, do much more touch the senses of man, then those things do, which are natural. Neither are they to be compared with such things, as having a natural cause (howbeit secret) do happen to be seen daily and ordinarily. Now I say, that the cause of these things (though naturall) is secret: For *Alexander Aphrodisens*, speaking of the noise of the File, and how it setteth the teeth on edge, with other things of like nature, saith, that Nature hath reserved the reason thereof unto her own secret knowledg, not being willing to impart the cause thereof unto men. The like may be affirmed of the greatest part of those *Antipathies*, which being concealed from men, yet cannot come of any secret seeds, that are contrary or enemies to nature (as the *Epicures* dote) but are hidden in the secret *Magazin* or Storehouse of Nature, which hath not revealed or laid the same open unto any person. Who can tell the reason why the *Conciliatour*, otherwise called *Peter de Albano*, did abhor milk? Why *Horace*, and *Jaques de Furly* could not abide *Garlike*? nor *Cardan* could away with *Egs*. And why that Gentleman of *Gascoigne* (of whom *Julius Cesar Scaliger* speaketh) could not abide the sound of a *Violl*? And of this latter in *Cardan* you may read the History. The Physitian *Scaliger* writeth, how he himself knew a Gentleman, his neighbour, which had in him such an *Antipathy* at the sound of a *Violl*, that as soon as ever he heard it (were he in any company, even of the best sort, and that either at Table; or elsewhere) he was constrained to forsake the place, and to go away to make water.

Now it happened, that certain Gentlemen having of a long time perceived and known this strange nature and disposition in him, did one day invite this Gentleman to dine with them; and having provided and suborned a certain Minstrel of purpose, they caused him to be kept close till the appointed dinner time, when being set at Table, they had so placed the Gent. in the midst of them, as it was not possible for him to get forth. Now as they were in the midst of their dinner, in came the Fidler, and began to strike up his *Violl* near unto the Gent. he that never heard the sound of that instrument, but was presently taken with an extream desite to pisse, grew into an exceeding great pain: for being not able to get from the Table, nor daring to lay open his imperfection to the whole company; the poor man shewed by the often change of his countenance, in what pitiful case and pain he was. But in the end he was constrained to yield to the present mischief, and to reveal his imperfection. He that should undertake to search and find out the cause of this so admirable an *Antipathy*, I assure my self he should be as long a time about it, as was *Aristotle* in seeking out the cause of the Flowing and Ebbing of the Seas, (whereof have written *Gregory Nazianzen*;



zianzen, Justine Martyr, Eusebius, and others) and yet he could never learn the certain cause thereof.

But as touching the reason why the Lion doth fly from the Cock: It commeth not from any seeds that lye hidden within the eyes of the Cock, and which from thence, should strike into the eyes, and hurt the sight of the Lion: but it is by a kind of Antipathy, whereof we have formerly spoken. By which also the Elephant doth fly from the Hogge, and the Horse from the Stone Taraxippe; Or else it is, for that the Cock and the Lion, partaking both of them of the nature of the Sun (but the Cock more then the Lion;) it happeneth that the Lion perceiving it, doth presently fly from him; as the valiant Hector is said to fly before Achilles, who was more brave and more warlike then he. Or else it is because the Cock, being a celestiaall fowly, and the Lion a terrestriall Creature, and of a grosser matter (having the spirits more sensitive and brutal then the other) doth therefore by nature yield and give place, to that which is more excellent. And this reason seemeth unto me in some sort allowable: the rather, for that those Devils which are of a more materiall and terrestriall nature, and be called Devils of the Sun, do fly the voice of the Cock, as well as the Lion (as Psellus teacheth us). And thus, in my opinion, you see sufficiently how all the Arguments and foolish dreams and fancies of the Epicures, may be soon answered; and easily dissolved.

Now it happened, that certain Gentlemen having of a long time perceived and known this strange nature and disposition in him, did one day invite this Gentleman to dine with them; and having provided and ordered a certain Mischell of purple, they called him to be kept till the appointed dinner time, which being done, they had to place the Gent in the middle of them, as it was not possible for him to get forth. Now as they were in the middle of their dinner, in came the Fiddler, and began to strike up his Viol near unto the Gent, he then never heard the sound of that instrument, but was presently taken with an extreme desire to play, grew into an exceeding great pain: for being not able to get from the table, he began to cry open his impetuousness to the whole company, the poor man moved by the open change of his countenance, in what part he could, did to the end he was contented to yield to the violent desire, and to wear his habit, that should undertake to fetch and put out the strings of this instrument, I assure myself he had long a time about it, always staid in looking out the window, playing and fiddling of the same, (which I have written down in the margin)

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