

The Congregation of the Dead

*The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.
– Proverbs 21:16 –*

The devil is not a creator, but he is an inventor. He invents evil things by confusing, confounding, conflating, and perverting all that is good and right. He attempts to mock God by aping Him – mimicking the divine purpose with his diabolical counterfeits. This paradigm is played out manifestly in the Scriptures as point-and-counter-point between heaven and hell. God has His plan, and Satan his schemes. If Moses and Aaron perform miracles by the hand of Jehovah, Jannes and Jambres meet them with an occultic response. God offers fullness of joy, while hell guarantees the beginning of sorrows. There is a mystery of godliness, but also a mystery of iniquity. If we read of a virgin birth of the Savior, we see that Antichrist will be the uniquely originated seed of the Serpent. Jesus is the Son of Man, the Lamb of God, Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; the Antichrist is the Man of Sin, the Beast from the Earth, he that was, and is not, and yet is. Likewise, if God has His assembly of the saints, we can expect that Satan will boast a congregation of the dead.

This congregation is in every way antithetical to the Church of the Firstborn. It is certainly more diverse in thought and practice than God's assembly. Entry comes not by an exclusive act of faith in a singular divine redemptive work, but by merely wandering off the path of understanding. Not that faith is entirely eschewed here, but it is not necessary, either. There are many other virtues of equal and opposite selection. Human reason, atheism, superstition, narcissism, cynicism, skepticism, stoicism, mysticism, etc., are as vibrantly authorized and represented in this congregation as devotion to any one or more of its multiple deities, be they the Buddha, Allah, Ormazd, Moroni, et. al. When it comes to human emotion and relationship, this body of unbelief is characterized (as mandated by the devil himself) by almost everything imaginable – envy, hatred, variance, emulation, strife, seditions, tumult, lust, concupiscence, lawlessness, and such like. In all the diversity, however, there is something that is not only uniquely lacking, but forthrightly barred from Hell's great assembly. It is the love of God. God's gracious love for sinners is the one thing that cannot be found in any form of representation, vouchsafing its eternal and sulfuric imprimatur – the congregation of the dead.

We see and interact with them daily, the members of this congregation. We should be able to recognize them, since we were once part of the same membership roll. Some are loose affiliates, actually difficult to discern, betraying themselves only after significant conversation. An increasing number of this assembly, however, are becoming deeply associated with the corporate body's soullessness, wearing their lostness, confusion, and frustration on their countenance and in their comportment. They have so obviously wandered out of the way of understanding, and they appear (to themselves) to be confined to and confirmed in this congregation of the dead. Unless we intervene. And we are commissioned by Heaven to do just that. By showing them the only thing they will recognize as different from what they already know – the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge – can these congregants escape their master's clutches. Which of its members will we have influence with today? --- D. Murcek