167 Enemy (*Hostis*)

Man has a triple enemy: the world, the flesh, and the devil.

For the devil opposes him in every state, because in the state of fault by drawing him to hell, just as the wolf draws the sheep in the ditch, Lam. 3[:52]: “My enemies have chased me and caught me like a bird, without cause.”

Second, in the state of penance by tempting him more forcefully and if possible, calling him back to sin, just as one sorrowing having lost his castle gathers an army to recuperate it. So, a cat follows a mouse fleeing before him, the keeper of a prison pursues a fleeing thief, Matt. [12:45]: “That spirit takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in.” Because the figure was in Pharaoh pursuing the sons of Israel, Exod. 15[:19]. He said the enemy pursues the penitent man by tempting him and when he is caught by detaining him in sin, and by plundering the divided spoils with that one, just like dogs spoil food and vices spoil virtues.

¶ Third, in the state of good working and grace by molesting him and if possible by corrupting him, so poisoners intoxicate when they cannot kill, so the devil when he cannot impede the good mixes it with evil, Matt. 13[:25]: “his enemy came and over sowed cockle.” These enemies we must resist manfully.

First, it is by calling upon the help of God and the saints, just as the keeper of a castle when besieged by sending to his lord for help, Psal. [17:4]: “Praising I will call upon the Lord: and I shall be saved from my enemies.”

Second, in confession by crying bitterly, so the thief or the wolf flees hearing the clamor, Gen. 49[:8]: “Juda, you shall your brethren praise: your hands shall be on the necks of your enemies.”

¶ Third, by resisting in the beginnings of temptations, so the fire is easily extinguished. In the beginning of temptation and before the entry at the gate the enemy is more easily resisted, Psal. [126:5]: “He shall not be confounded when he shall speak to his enemies in the gate.” Here Seneca says in a certain *Epistula*,[[1]](#endnote-1) a foolish man would be besieged in a castle, if in the meanwhile he would be inflamed by diversions and novelties, so it is concerning man neglecting his health in this life which is full of temptations and attacks, Neh. 4[:11]: “Our enemies,” etc.

They attack us in three ways in the manner of besieging cities, because sometimes they hurl darts with machines to destroy the walls, sometimes with fires to burn the gates, and sometimes with mediators for taking the food. But what the vigilant besieged ones do they place sacks filled with straw on the walls against the blows of the machines, and thus they weaken and deceive the force of the blows. So, Josephus narrates in the book *Antiquitatum de obsidione Jerusalem*.[[2]](#endnote-2) So ought the tempted in pride put up the straw sack of humility by considering himself earth, Psal. [143:4]: “Man is like to vanity.” And Job [13:25]: “You pursue a dry straw.” And Gen. [18:27]: “I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes.” Again, if he is tempted by his neighbor through wrath let him oppose the straw of patience and a soft response, according to that of Prov. [15:1]: “A mild answer breaks wrath.”

The second way is that the enemies attack cities and castles by applying fire to the gates, but against this the besieged send down stakes with javelins fastened over the besiegers. So, one tempted through lust brings to bear the shrewdness of the Lord as judge in the brevity of delight.

¶ In the third way they attack by the subtraction of foods and the cutting off the canals of waters, as did Holofernes in besieging the cities [Judith 7:6]. But against this the besieged provide for themselves food and wells, so the devil is inclined to withdraw from man the taste of devotion and substitute the husks of the hogs, that is, various and useless thoughts for ruminating on. Just so Anselm gives the example in the book *De similitudinibus*,[[3]](#endnote-3) where he compares the human heart to a grinding mill into which an evil subordinate, that is, the devil puts in straw, pitch, and gravel, unless the watchful subordinate is present who would put in good grain. For the heart of man, while he is watchful cannot be idle. Therefore, it is healthful for man to provide for himself from the nourishment of the divine word, because without it, men easily begin to grow evil, Isai. 1[:9]: “Except the Lord of hosts had left us seed,” that is, of his word, “we had been as Sodom, and we should have been like to Gomorrah.” Just as recently it is evident concerning the Templars destroyed because they were lay and lacked good teaching, they corrupted in judicial vice.[[4]](#endnote-4) So today people descend unless good teaching stabilizes them. Again, the devil confides more in our flesh for besieging us than in his proper power.

1. Cf. Seneca, *Epistula* 48.8 (LCL:318-319): Hic, cum quo ludis, timet; succurre, †quidquid laque ti res pendentium penis.1† Omnes undique ad te manus tendunt, perditae vitae perituraeque auxilium aliquod inplorant, in te spes opesque sunt.

This friend, in whose company you are jesting, is in fear. Help him, and take the noose from about his neck. Men are stretching out imploring hands to you on all sides; lives ruined and in danger of ruin are begging for some assistance; men’s hopes, men’s resources, depend upon you. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Flavius Josephus, *Jewish War* 3.20.222-225 (LCL 487:68-69): Josephus, seeing that under the repeated blows constantly directed upon the same spot the wall was on the verge of collapsing, devised a method of paralysing for a while the force of the machine, He directed that sacks filled with chaffa should be let down by ropes at the place which the ram was seen from time to timeb to be battering, with the object of deflecting the head and deadening the force of the blow by the soft cushion which received it. This seriously retarded the Romans, for, wherever they turned their engine, those above retorted by opposing their sacks beneath the strokes, and so the wall suffered no injury from the impact. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. Eadmer of Canterbury, *Anselmi Similitudinibus* 41 (PL 159:621):Cor etenim nostrum simile est molendino semper molenti, quod dominus quidam cuidam servo suo custodiendum dedit, praecipiens ei ut suam tantum annonam, videlicet frumentum, vel hordeum, vel etiam avenam, in eo molat, et ex eodem quod moluerit, ipse vivat. Verum illi servo quidam inimicatur, qui huic molendino semper insidiatur; qui si quando illud vacuum invenerit, aut arenam ibi statim projicit quae illud dissipat, aut picem quae conglutinat, aut aliquid quod foedat, aut paleam quae tantum illud occupat. Servus igitur ille si molendinum suum bene custodierit, dominique sui tantum annonam in eo moluerit, munda ex eo farina egreditur juxta genus annonae quae intus molitur. Ex eodem autem quod moluerit, et domino suo servit, sibique ipsi victum acquirit. Si vero inimicum suum violare molendinum suum permiserit, mala ex eo farina procedit, quia mala est annona quam molit. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. With Philip threatening military action unless the pope complied with his wishes, Pope Clement finally agreed to disband the order, citing the public scandal that had been generated by the confessions. At the Council of Vienne in 1312, he issued a series of papal bulls, including *Vox in excelso*, which officially dissolved the order, and *Ad providam*, which turned over most Templar assets to the Hospitallers.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knights_Templar#Arrests,_charges_and_dissolution> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)