

Part V

Mysticism,  
Mediums,  
Witchcraft,  
and Magic

## A Victim of Magic

Cases of demon-controlled persons show a remarkable consistency whenever and wherever they occur. I have noticed that such cases—whether encountered in New York in the 1960's, or in Zurich in the 1950's, or in China in the 1930's, in Europe more than a century ago, or in the Biblical accounts of almost 2,000 years ago—are strikingly alike in their salient particulars.

A missionary to Europe and a former missionary to China, neither of whom knew anything of the other's experiences, gave me accounts of their dealings with demon-controlled individuals that matched in point after point. And these accounts were consistent, even in some of their least ordinary details, with many others that I read about or heard or saw at first hand.

The pattern of tremendous consistency that ran through account after account reflects the supernatural reality separately encountered by many individuals, widely scattered in place and time. Demons are about the same in their manifestations wherever and

whenever they are found. Their powers are used against their victims in ways that have remained the same throughout human history.

A friend of mine, Frank S. Boshold, has just completed a translation into English of an extraordinary document: an account by a German Lutheran minister of his harrowing, and ultimately successful, effort to bring relief to a demon-possessed parishioner.

The account, made by the minister as his official report to the Synod of Württemberg, was later published in Germany under the title *Blumhardts Kampf*. It will be made available in English under the title *Blumhardt's Battle: A Conflict With Satan*. I have permission to quote portions of it here. They show the range of effects that may be suffered in an extremely serious case of molestation by evil spirits.

The writer is Johann Christoph Blumhardt (1805–1880). The victim for whom relief was sought was Gottliebin Dittus. The events described occurred in 1842 and 1843 in Möttlingen, Germany.

“When she prayed at the table . . . she had a fit in which she fell to the floor, unconscious. What was heard was a frequently recurring trampling and scuffing in the bedroom, the living room, and the kitchen. At times these noises lasted all night . . . Gottliebin saw with special frequency the figure of a woman . . . holding a dead child in her arms. . . . This woman, she said, would always stand at the same place in front of her bed and at times would move toward her. . . .

“I decided to make an investigation in the house. I made a secret agreement with the mayor of the town, carpet manufacturer Kraushaar, a sensible, sober, and God-fearing man; and several men of the town council. [We] arrived, unexpected, around ten o'clock in the evening. . . . As soon as I entered the living room, two immense bangs met me from the bedroom. In a short time, others followed. Noises, bangs, and knockings of the most varied kind were heard, mostly in the bedroom, where Gottliebin lay on her bed, fully dressed. . . . In the space of three hours, twenty-five bangs were heard toward a certain spot in the bedroom. They were so loud that the chair leaped, the windows rattled, and sand fell from the ceiling. Villagers at a far distance were reminded of the shooting on New Year's Eve. . . . Everything was checked in greatest detail but no explanation could be found in any wise . . . as soon as something was heard she usually would fall into violent convulsions. . . .

“On a Sunday night I went there again when a number of her women friends were present and silently watched her terrible convulsions. I sat down at some distance. She twisted her arms, turned her head to the side, and bent her body up high. Foam flowed again from her mouth. . . .

“It hurt me to think that there should be no means of help in such a horrible affair. . . . I jumped forward, took her stiff hands, pulled her fingers together with force as for prayer, loudly spoke her name into her ear in her unconscious state and said, ‘Fold your hands and pray, “Lord Jesus, help me!” *We have seen long enough what the devil is doing, now we also want to see what Jesus can do.*’ After a few moments she awakened, prayed those words after me, and all convulsions ceased, to the great surprise of those present. This was the decisive moment which pulled me into activity for the cause with irresistible power. Before I had not the slightest thought of it.”

Pastor Blumhardt, having seen that the case lay beyond the power of physicians to relieve, took the matter on at the level on which it actually was—the level of supernatural conflict. Almost immediately, he became the object of counterattack.

He found that “something hostile in her was directing itself against me. . . . She clenched her fists. . . . close to my eyes as if she wanted to rip out both of my eyes quickly. . . . Finally the whole thing passed when with great force she thrashed repeatedly. . . .”

The writer tells of a later visit: “When I went to Gottlieb’s house with my usual companions (because I never wanted to go there without reliable eye and ear witnesses) . . . she herself was lying on her bed, was conscious, and felt no trouble. Suddenly it seemed as if something went into her and her whole body got into motion. I then prayed some and mentioned the name of Jesus. Immediately she rolled her eyes, banged her hands together, and said with a voice which could instantly be recognized as not being hers, not only because of the tone but because of the expression and character of it, ‘I cannot stand to hear that Name.’ . . . Many threatening words were spoken against me. . . . Those present, including the mayor, received many a knock and fistblow which however were never dared against me as the demons expressly stated that they were not allowed to do anything against me, the pastor, even though they would have loved to. Here and there she tore her hair, threw her head against the wall, and tried to hurt herself in many ways.”

The minister cast out fourteen demons on one occasion. “After

those fourteen demons were expelled, the number climbed quickly to 175, then to 425. I cannot give a detailed description of the individual scenes since everything happened too quickly. . . . After the last of those battles, quietness came for several days. But at night many figures pressed around the bed of Gottlieb, according to her statement. Also a nurse said she had seen several figures at that time. One night, in her sleep, she felt herself suddenly seized on the neck by a burning hand which left huge burns. When the nurse (her aunt) who slept in the same room had lighted a light, she saw that huge blisters, already filled with liquid, had risen all around her neck. The doctor, who came the next day, could not refrain from marveling at it. The neck did not heal until several weeks later."

One afternoon Gottlieb "heatedly demanded a knife. Her frightened brother and sister would not allow a knife to get into her hands. Then she ran to the attic, jumped on the window sill, and already stood outside in free air, only holding on with one hand on the inside, when the first flash of lightning of the approaching thunderstorm met her eye, frightened and awakened her. She came to and cried, 'For God's sake, I don't want to do that.' The moment of light disappeared and in the returning delirium she took hold of a rope . . . and tied it skillfully around the beams of the attic. She made a noose which easily pulled tight. She had nearly forced her whole head into the noose, when a second flash of lightning caught her eye through the window. As before it brought her back to consciousness. A stream of tears flowed from her eyes the following day when she looked at the noose hanging from the beam. She could never have tied it as skillfully in the best of consciousness.

" . . . The patient sank backwards as usual when demonic attacks came on her. . . . Suddenly the wrath and ill humor of the demons broke loose with full strength [against the minister] and many statements like the following were heard, mostly in a howling and wailing voice, 'Now everything is lost! Now everything is betrayed! You disturb us thoroughly. The whole alliance goes to pieces. All is over. Everything is confusion. It is your fault with your constant praying. Woe, woe. You will yet drive us out. All is lost.'

"During the course of the following days it became evident that by far not all the demons had been removed from the patient. . . . She would often lie as dead while her breath was held from within her. . . . Also sometimes she was so paralyzed that she could hardly move a member of her body by her own will. . . . With other spirits

which identified themselves from then on, there seemed to be a question of what was going to happen to them. . . . They had a terror of the abyss which they felt near now and said, among other things, 'You are our worst enemy, but we, too, are your enemies. If only we could as we would!' And then again, 'Oh, if only there were no God in heaven!' . . . The patient was tortured incessantly. Her body would often swell extraordinarily and she would vomit. . . . She also received frequent blows on her head, knocks in the side, and in addition suffered from heavy nosebleeding. . . ."

On February 8, 1843, Gottliebin "lay on her bed nearly all day . . . caught away in her spirit into far regions. . . . It seemed to her that someone led her with extraordinary speed over land and sea. She was floating above the surface. She flew through many countries and cities, passed over ships in the ocean whose crews she could clearly see and hear talk, until she came to a world of islands. She floated from island to island. Finally she came to a high mountain on whose pinnacle she was set down. On the summit was a large, wide opening out of which spewed fire and smoke. All around her lightnings flashed, thunders rolled, and the earth quaked. In the coastal areas at the foot of the mountains she saw that cities and villages were overthrown and the dust rise up high. On the ocean, ships and other conveyances went into confusion and many of them sank into the water. In the middle of this scene of horror the demons which had tortured her most up until then were brought forth. The worst of all, the demon with the immense book, was the first to be cast headlong into the abyss with great roaring and screaming. After him about a thousand others followed, all of whom rushed upon Gottliebin as if to try to drag her with them into the abyss. When all this was over, Gottliebin was brought back in the same way as she had gone there and awakened, rather terrified, but otherwise well. I cannot guarantee what she told here but I was astonished and surprised above measure when a short time later newspapers reported in detail about the terrible earthquake which happened exactly on the 8th of February in the West Indies. . . . I cannot keep silent about what relationship the earthquake of that time had with the battle here, also the weather and other things. The drought of the year 1842 and the excess of rain of the year 1843 were mentioned by the demons. The thing that horrified me most was that the many fires in cities (the demons put the number at thirty-six) were directly related to the influence, even the direct work of the demons. One demon especially came to the fore which pretended to have fanned the flames

of Hamburg with special ravenous lust. I asked him what had caused him to do this. He answered with one word, 'Lust.'

"It was shown that things without number in the body of Gottlieb had been, to use the only word possible, charmed into her body, all with the intent to put her out of this world. It started with vomiting up sand and small pieces of glass. After a while all sorts of pieces of iron came out, especially old and bent boardnails. Once, after much retching, twelve of those fell into the bowl held under her, right before my eyes. . . . Beside those an unaccountable amount of pins, needles, and pieces of knitting needles came out. . . . I always had several eyewitnesses with me. I insisted upon this without fail in order to prevent evil rumors. [The objects] could be brought out only through prayer. . . . There were so many objects that I could not enumerate them all . . . even living animals came out of her mouth."

Delivering the patient from objects that had been introduced, unknown to her, into her body led Pastor Blumhardt prayerfully to consider how this might be, and the following excerpt shows how perceptive he was:

"During the many battles which I had to go through after the one just mentioned, I thought a great deal about the way and manner in which the magic powers were used. I felt a need to be able to think at least of some explanation for myself. Of course I thought that there are still secrets about the essence of matter which philosophy has not found out with surety. I thought if matter was a conglomeration of a kind of atoms, as already many philosophers thought, then magic would be, I supposed, nothing else but a secret art taught by the sinister power, how to dissolve the bonds between the different atoms in order to make the object which is being used unrecognizable, even invisible. Then it enters with other things, for example ordinary food, where the person who exercises this art wants it to go. Then the dissolved bonds are re-established there and the object appears the same as it was before.

"Thus Gottlieb could well remember from former times that once in a while she would immediately feel something strange in her throat or in her body after having eaten a soup or other dishes. Once she tossed a leftover of such a meal to a chicken. Immediately the chicken ran around like mad and after a while fell over dead, as if suffocated. She opened the neck and head of the chicken and to her horror there were a lot of shoenails."

On one occasion blood came "out of both of her ears, both of

her eyes and her nose and even out of the upper part of her head. That was the most gruesome thing I have ever seen. . . . At first I did not know what to do, but I collected myself and, after a short, serious sigh of prayer, the bleeding stopped for the time being. . . . On the front part of her head above the forehead, I noticed something and soon a small, bent nail bored itself through . . . from now on the bleeding stopped.”

A missionary whose veracity I cannot doubt told me that she had discovered that objects were introduced into the bodies of human victims by the powers of witchcraft, and she showed me half a dozen pieces of metal which she said had come out of the bodies of persons who had come to her for help. The objects are “planted” into the body at least partly to bring damage or death to the victim and perhaps also partly as the token of a kind of claim of Satan upon the individual.

“. . . This all leads up to the fact that there are people who have the art of being outside of their bodies, in the spirit, probably not always while completely conscious.”

All of this magic has its root, Pastor Blumhardt concluded, in “the sin of idolatry, which by steps leads up to magic and complete black magic.”

“Idolatry may be considered every reliance on a supernatural, invisible power, based upon which a man is attempting to obtain either health, honor, gain, or pleasure, as long as this power is not purely divine. . . . Slowly I learned to get a glimpse into the horrible consequences of all of this idolatry. The first effect is that a man becomes more or less bound to a sinister Satanic power. This happens through a demon which wins influence over him because it is enticed through the act of idolatry. . . . A man without knowing it and without noticing it, is bound in spirit by Satan so that the spirit, of course a psychological mystery, can be absent from the body even though the soul, as it seems, is present in the body.

“. . . Most of the witches and warlocks to whom are ascribed all kinds of misfortune, disease, plagues of men and cattle, are what they are in this capacity, without their knowledge. The most would be that once in a while they have a feeling of what they do in the spirit without being able to explain this feeling. In any case, they are highly unfortunate people, and from this follows that the accusation of a living person [against a warlock] is unmerciful as a rule and must be rejected. . . .”

The purpose of the plagues and misfortunes that come upon victims because of magic “is none other but to drive these people



into a corner so that they in turn will also use superstitious and idolatrous means in order to be caught in the snare themselves." In other words, they try to "change their luck"—to trade in bad luck for good luck by using the various means of magic.

According to one definition magic is "the art of producing a desired effect or result through the use of various techniques, as incantation, that presumably assure human control of supernatural agencies or the forces of nature." With it go magic spells, magic rites, magic words, enchantments, witchcraft, hexes, communication with the "dead," and a wide variety of other practices and means. There is in it, no doubt, very much quackery and fakery, but there is also a potent realm of magic that produces real effects. That which is not fake in it is all very ancient, and it is all demonic and Satanic.

Magic, has, Pastor Blumhardt writes, "a series of steps: On the lowest level are those who, as the saying goes, are being used in magic itself and thus become ensnared without being conscious of it from then on. The highest level is black magic proper in which the person serves Satan with full consciousness and who grants him these powers.

"In the middle between the two categories are those who make a trade out of the use of magic means. . . . Usually they use printed booklets . . . which are revelations of Satan proper."

"This third category of magicians can speak their formulas and do their manipulations for a long time with the seeming consciousness of being benefactors of mankind, even in the reputation of great piety, although always with a bad conscience. But they are being ensnared deeper and deeper through their heathen practices and therefore the danger of becoming black magicians proper comes closer and closer. Closest, although probably still deceived, are those who receive, if I may say so, demons from the devil which become their counselors and which demand the name and age of people looking for help and through which the magicians inquire. These demons appear to them, either visibly or invisibly, through certain means which they use, including mirrors."

In the months before he fatally wounded Robert F. Kennedy, Sirhan Sirhan steeped himself in the lore of occultism and magic. The assassin's prolonged experimentation with mysticism, and his use of a mirror, was detailed in the long aftermath of that jarring event.

In his bedroom, Sirhan spent scores of hours reading about the

Middle East and the occult. He described about twenty books he read during the year preceding the slaying, dealing with metaphysics and the power of the mind.

In an article titled "Sirhan Through the Looking Glass," *Time* reported: "A mirror. Two flickering candles. And Sirhan Sirhan. Alone in his cramped room, day after day, hour after silent hour, Sirhan studied Sirhan. Mail order courses in Rosicrucian mysticism had given him a new creed. They told the disturbed Christian Arab that he could unlock from the mirror image of Sirhan Sirhan the inner knowledge, happiness and power he craved.

"Focusing his mind power on the looking glass, Sirhan soon convinced himself that he could order an inanimate object to move. He rigged a pendulum from a fisherman's weight, and on command, he said, it began to sway. Yet telekinesis—the ability to cause objects at a distance to move through the exercise of will—was a frightening power, and Sirhan feared that he might lose his mind. Once, instead of his own image in the mirror, Sirhan saw a vision of Robert Kennedy, the man he was soon afterward to kill.

"The candles swayed and changed color. . . . One key to the killing," according to the psychoanalyst, Dr. Bernard L. Diamond, "must be found in Sirhan's arcane experiments with the mirror. It was during his self-induced trances, Diamond said, that Sirhan scribbled over and over that 'Kennedy must die.'"

Dr. Diamond, who also holds professorships in law and criminology, described the act as murder in a trance. He said he had made Sirhan relive the killing in his prison cell by hypnotizing him with a coin held eight inches from his eyes. He testified that, as Sirhan fired an imaginary gun "convulsively again and again," his face bore an expression of "the most violent contorted rage."

It would seem probable that, through the devices and rituals of magic, Sirhan unknowingly incurred an alliance with demons who were able to drive him to insanity and murder. His private aberration had public consequences that cut close to the heart of our national life.

Returning to the Blumhardt account: "The demons answer the questions asked of them, of course not without an interest in the reign of darkness. Thus it comes that Christians ask advice at the mouth of Beelzebub (II Kings 1:2-4). Black magicians proper are those who, so to speak, have made a formal pact with the devil. This can happen individually or through joining certain societies whose foundation is such a secret pact. In both cases the signing of the name with blood takes place. This is done by cutting the

finger or some other part of the body and using the blood which flows to sign one's name.

“. . . What black magicians are looking for is mostly good fortune, lust, money, and protection against bodily dangers. The arts they possess are of many kinds. They are able to provide money for themselves . . . they can kill people hundreds of hours away, and strokes of which often the healthiest persons die can be the consequence of a magic stroke from a shorter or longer distance. They also start fires without being seen. Of course, I have to leave everyone to himself as to what he wants to believe of these things. But alas, the horrible surety I gained of their existence! However, a battle against these sinister powers, begun by faith in Him Who crushed the head of the serpent, could never be but victorious. Our Lord is still greater!”

This assertion about fires checks with an event from my experience. I lived for six years in a large building in New York City in which there were no untoward events until a series of fires began in it. For a period of a little over a month there were frequent fires, sometimes more than one in a day. Each time the fire alarm would clang throughout the building, there would be a scurrying to evacuate, the firemen and their apparatus would come and put the blaze out, usually before any extensive damage was done. The number of these fires went up and up. They broke out on various floors, in various rooms and apartments. Their number reached twenty in not much over twice as many days. An investigation was started but it did not produce any clear-cut leads. Twice a small group of the occupants met for prayer. On the second of these occasions a minister who had come to the building at the request of a tenant said that, while he was in prayer about the fires in the building, he had seen as in a vision a certain individual setting fires. He said that he took authority over that individual in the name of Jesus Christ and bound him in the spirit from setting any more fires. It was, to say the least, a surprising assertion. Yet he made it with quiet assurance, as a man who knew exactly what he was talking about. From that day on, the fires stopped. The source of those fires was not apprehended by the investigators, the whole thing was beyond them. Certainly the source of those fires was driven to set them by the temptations of Satan, and spiritually effective action was taken in prayer to cut in against this demonic prompting to touch off fires.

I am also certain that fire is one of the things that Satan, the destroyer, likes to use against man when he has opportunity. He

needs human beings to be the agents of fire. War is full of the use of fire. Though it is true that it was but what they had sown, the firebombing of Dresden in World War II, in which more than 32,000 civilians died in a storm of fire in one night, had just that quality of fiendishness in it that suggests a demonic inspiration.

Returning to Pastor Blumhardt's account: "The impressions I gained in the course of the battle were always immediate and remained not understood for a long time. I left them in their raw state for the time being, but collected them in my spirit until finally they all fit into a horrible coherence. Not until the end of the episode did I get clarity on the whole and on the details.

"Finally I was led to the conclusion to think of a certain Satanic plot according to which all of mankind was to be drawn away after the plan of the devil, slowly, unawares and with deception, in order for the reign of Satan to become more common and the reign of Christ to be destroyed."

As to why Gottlieb Dittus had become so singularly victimized by evil spirits, the minister found the influence of magic or witchcraft present from her earliest childhood on. Gottlieb told of "circumstances from her childhood which point to the fact that she was laid in wait for, in order to implicate her in the net of magic. . . . Soon after her birth she was in danger of being carried away invisibly. Her mother, who died ten years ago, often told her she had the child by her side in the bed and in her sleep she suddenly feared for the child, awakened, did not feel the child and called out, 'Lord Jesus, my child!' Then something fell to the floor at the bedroom door; it was the child. The same thing happened once more in a similar way. . . .

"Soon the child was sent to a cousin who was generally feared as an evil person and who once said to the seven-year-old child, 'When you are ten years old, I will teach you something worthwhile.' This age is usually mentioned as the time of possible initiation into magic. She also said, 'If only you did not have the name of Gottlieb (literally, lover of God or beloved of God) and had different godparents, I would give you great power in the world.' Similar sayings caused the child concern. In her quiet thoughts she always remembered the verse, 'Our Lord is great and of great power and it is beyond understanding how he rules.'

". . . Once in a while sympathetic means ["magic predicated on the belief that one thing can affect another at a distance"] and magiclike medication were used on the child when she was sick. This is why, like others, she was pulled into the net."

But, having been instructed in faith in the living God by her pastor and her parents, the girl shunned everything that tended in the direction of magic. She had been, as it were, marked for involvement in magic and introduced to it and "she was to be misused according to the principles of darkness to plague others. . . . But her spirit . . . withstood the insinuations of darkness through which she drew its hatred upon herself. There resulted, it appears, a sort of tension between her and the sinister realm which, as it has the desire to be unified in itself, went after her as a deserter. Now the question was to ensnare her really into magic, and at that into the deepest magic, because she only seemed safe for the devil in this way; or to do away with her lest through her resistance a disadvantage to the sinister realm result."

As a young woman, with both parents dead, she had the care of a brother and a sister and was very poor. Once she had nothing but some bread in the house and only ten cents "but when she entered her room, the floor was covered with thaler pieces. She was frightened and moved them with her feet in order to see whether they were really thalers." A while later, the thalers vanished. ". . . She preferred, as she said, to remain in the most bitter poverty rather than to be made rich by the devil. . . . Before I knew of the above things, I heard the demons say, 'What a shame that this girl does not want to take anything. We always put it so carefully for her.'

". . . Gottlieb came home once, when once more neither she nor her brother or sister had any food in the house. She was disquieted and discouraged when she entered her living room. To her surprise she saw a man's shirtsleeve full of flour. Besides this, a large coin was wrapped in paper and lay on top of the flour . . . she kept the flour and money not without thanking God for them, although she could not discover the giver even though she asked all around.

"Later, however, she ascribed most of the magic spells which occurred in her to this flour. . . . One demon later on actually said that it all had been Satanic deception and that she should not have eaten this flour. . . . These happenings give the clue, so to speak, to the whole story. To begin with we have to do with a soul which resisted Satan although it already felt his bondage. She felt herself bound to one side, the Satanic, with a certain power and her heart sought for the other side, the divine. . . . Thus the battle began which drew ever widening circles because darkness did not want to give in and because even in the Satanic realm one member

hangs together with the others and everything is very closely related. Thus, no matter how insignificant the person was, all of hell could be stirred up by and by."

When Pastor Blumhardt was drawn into the battle he determined not to allow Gottliebin Dittus to "become the victim of darkness at any price. I could only do this by not trying any other means except prayer which held fast to the invisible divine power. Satan was constantly trying to do away with Gottliebin's life, especially when the secret of the Satanic deception became more and more evident. This seemed especially to infuriate the demons. . . . For this reason a removal of the person seemed to become ever more necessary in order that the dark powers could make their survival sure. . . . The attacks on Gottliebin's life became more gruesome every day. As every object smuggled into her body had the purpose of killing her, she also tried much to commit suicide, as a rule, however, without being conscious of it. Beside what was told above, she hanged herself once in the woods with her scarf. Without knowing what she was doing, she carried together stones in order to hang high enough and then she tied the scarf artfully to the tree. She had already hung, when the scarf broke and the violent fall brought her to. On the same evening, without my knowing the above, one demon called out of her, 'What a shame that this girl cannot be killed. She hung herself and the rope had to break.' . . . In all of these and similar things the name of Jesus overcame, sometimes only the mention of the promise in Mark 16:17,18 or Philippians 2:10.

"The desired end of the story came during last Christmas (the 24th to 28th of December of 1843) when everything that had happened before seemed to come together once more. The worst part was that in those days the sinister influence also worked on the half-blind brother and another sister, Katharina, so that I had to fight the most desperate battle with three at the same time . . . they were days the like of which I hope never to live through again . . . . I clearly felt a divine protection so that I did not feel the slightest tiredness or weariness, not even after forty hours of waking, fasting, and wrestling [in prayer]. The brother was free the fastest and in such a way that he could immediately help me actively from then on. . . . The worst attack came on her sister Katharina who had before never experienced the least of such things. But now she raged in such a way that she could only be held with difficulty. She threatened to tear me into a thousand pieces and I could not dare to step too close to her. She made incessant

attempts [to harm herself]. . . . She chattered and cried so terribly during that time that one could think of thousands of blasphemous mouths united in hers. The most striking thing was that she remained completely conscious so that one could talk to her and so that she said, when strongly admonished, that she could not act or talk in any other way and to please hold her quite firmly lest anything happen through her. And even afterwards she had the clearest memory of everything, even of the most horrible attempts of murder."

A demon "spoke out of her. [It identified itself] as a prominent angel of Satan, as the chiefest of all magic, which had received power from Satan for this work. . . . It stated that the deadly blow to magic was given now that it had to go into the abyss. . . . Suddenly, toward twelve o'clock midnight, it seemed as though it beheld the open fiery abyss. Then out of the girl's throat roared several times and lasting for about a quarter of an hour, only one cry of despair with such violent strength that it seemed the house would collapse. Nothing more horrible can be thought of, and it could not be but that half of the town's inhabitants got knowledge of the battle. . . . Even though the demon seemed to be all fear and despair, its defiance was, nonetheless, no less gigantic and it demanded of God to give a sign because it would not go out until a sign had been given from heaven that would shake the entire town so that it would not have to lay down its role as commonly as other sinners but, so to speak, go to hell with honors. Such a horrifying mixture of despair, malice, defiance and pride has hardly ever been seen anywhere. In the meantime its expected destruction seemed to be prepared ever more rapidly in the unseen world. Finally the most moving moment came which no one can possibly imagine who was not an eye- and earwitness. At two o'clock in the morning . . . the girl bent back her head and upper part of her body over the backrest of the chair, with a voice of which one could hardly have believed a human throat capable, [and cried] 'Jesus is Victor! Jesus is Victor!'—words that sounded so far and were understood at such a distance that they made an unforgettable impression on many people.

". . . That was the point at which the battle of two years came to an end . . . she slowly came to complete health. All her former illnesses which are well known to the doctors were completely healed . . . her health became ever stronger and more durable. [Gottlieb Dittus became a teacher of children marked by] insight, love, patience, and kindness. . . . Now that a school for small

children is to be built, I cannot find a person who would be as suitable as she to lead this school.”

Six years later, Pastor Blumhardt wrote of her continued stability, health, and usefulness.

## Witchcraft in America

Possibly at no time in this century until the present would the account in the previous chapter have seemed even remotely germane to life in the United States. To many, undoubtedly, it will yet seem to be a horror story out of a distant place and time, hardly relevant to their own concerns. But the startling fact is that, as dreadful as it is in its details, everything in the account bears a direct relation to certain things now occurring in the United States.

For every evil effect described in the foregoing account, there is an occult practice that corresponds to it. A short time ago there came to my mailbox, unsolicited by me, the catalog of a dealer in occult and metaphysical literature. As I leafed through it, I read of promises of mysterious powers and of various practices that bore an amazing correspondence to the things told by Pastor Blumhardt. “These,” I remarked, “are the causes of those effects.” In short, there are formulas and dark powers in the occult realm that can bring about these terrible results in human lives. There is supernatural power—power capable of producing an impact on individuals and events—behind such practices, and that power derives from their nexus with evil spirits.

There has nearly always been a certain amount of spiritualism, possibly also of witchcraft, practiced in the United States, but for the most part it has been off in remote and obscure corners of our national life and it has rarely enjoyed widespread public favor. Lately, however, we have watched a rising vogue in occultism, astrology, magic, the work of mediums, witchcraft, and the like.

For quite a while it was entirely the fashion in this country to hold that there were no such things as witches—individuals who practice various kinds of magic or black magic—and I dare say that



anyone who had ventured to assert, ten or twenty years ago, that there *were* such individuals would have been regarded as hopelessly medieval. Now we are faced with the fact that there are witches who say they are witches.

Though it is still decidedly a minority phenomenon, witchcraft is now practiced quite openly in the United States and it has been getting a fair amount of publicity.

Accounts have appeared in newspapers, magazines, and books in the last two years in which persons who practice some form of witchcraft have told of their activities. The *Daily News*, the New York tabloid newspaper with the largest circulation in the nation, carried a full-page story by Lisa Hoffman, from which I quote in part:

“To moviegoers who saw the chillingly plausible *Rosemary’s Baby*, it may come as a disturbing surprise to learn that there really are such things as witches’ covens, one of which now operates in an otherwise typical suburban town on the South Shore of Long Island. Long Island holds no monopoly. In fact, [covens exist] elsewhere in New York, in New Jersey, Kentucky, California, Ohio, Washington, D. C. . . . Being what it is, the Craft, as it is known to its practitioners, keeps its membership rolls understandably secret and also the sites of most covens, [each] comprised of twelve couples presided over by a high priestess.

“Don’t make the mistake of thinking all this is a piece of arcane flummery. Twentieth-century witches are deadly serious. The chants, the swords, the music, the symbols, the herbs, and the incense are all pretty much what they were in the pre-Christian era of nature cults when the bizarre practice was born.

“The Long Island cult [is] headed by Lady Rowen, 32, and her husband Robat, 34, to give them their cultist names. . . . [They] are white, or good witches [who own] a large collection of books on the occult. . . . The couple, it seems, dropped out of the Church of England thirteen years ago to become disciples of Dr. Gerald Gardner who, until he keeled over on his breakfast tray while reading a book on magic four years ago, was considered the grand old man of British witchcraft.

“. . . They were ‘remarried’ with a ponderous sermon called ‘Handfasting.’ This boils down to a simple promise to be true to each other for ‘as long as love shall last.’ If love doesn’t last, either party is free to go his own way.

“That expedient philosophy is laid down in *The Book of Shadows*, which . . . contains all the rites, spells, charms, cures, and chants.

'Once in the month,' the book says, ' . . . gather in some secret place and adore me who am the Queen of all witcheries. . . . ' . . . each new witch copies his own book by hand from his mentor's.

"The Long Island coven holds its rituals in Robot's basement. . . . On Halloween, the major festival among the eight holidays on every witch's calendar . . . the witches, all nude, will begin singing and dancing. . . . Members of the coven say that Lady Rowan . . . has often brewed potions that have cured the minor ills of their children." The writer comments that the witches "seem to share a common faith in reincarnation."

Several months earlier the United Press International newswire carried a story from San Francisco on a wedding rite of a witchcraft cult: "Asking the blessings of Lucifer for a union 'conceived in hell,' Beelzebub, a priest of Satan, performed a marriage ceremony last night using a naked woman as an altar. . . . The dark rite was performed in the small icon-filled black-walled living room of Anton LaVey, 32 . . . who bills himself as the first priest of the Satanic church. It was conducted before a stone fireplace, by the light of candles stuck in human skulls. [Of the nude woman] LaVey explained that the altar shouldn't be a 'cold, unyielding slab of sterile stone or wood. It should be a symbol of enthusiastic lust and indulgence.' The bridegroom, 35, had been married twice before . . . LaVey said it was the first time ever for the diabolical ceremony which he said he concocted from his fifteen-year study of witchcraft, sorcery, and Satanism. The rite consisted of bells, gongs, chanting in a magic language from an old book, *The Equinox*, and some play with a sword and chalice. . . . Stuffed ravens, wolves, owls, and rats looked down from shelves everywhere."

You will notice similarities of usage and belief in the practices of the so-called white and the Satanist witches. Both use chants and swords in their rites and both have a book of mysteries whose formulas they follow. Both make a point of nudity (a practice which Satan has been thrusting forward lately in the United States in several forms) and both twist matrimony into little more than an interim alliance for lust.

The Satanist cult worships the devil. The other coven meets in secret to adore "the Queen of all witcheries"—addressing worship not to God, to Whom all worship belongs, but to a demon spirit. This is the utmost violation of the law given by God to Moses.

*Mademoiselle* magazine made witchcraft the theme of a "Special

Magical Mystery Issue” whose cover promised: “Sorcery and Sex: A terrific tour of spells, charms, witchcraft, and the mysterious East . . . Yoga . . . India’s exciting Tantric art. Chilling occult novel complete in this issue.”

The issue included an interview with Dr. Harry E. Wedeck, a college professor with an extensive knowledge of the history of witchcraft. Unless witches practiced “white magic,” Dr. Wedeck said, “their intentions and operations were evil. Commonly they attempted ruin and destruction, even if they didn’t always succeed. On request of their ‘clients,’ they could blight crops, cause livestock to sicken, even cause diseases in humans.”

Are there many witches around now, he was asked?

“In the Far East and India, naturally, but there are some in England, rural France, all over Europe, and everyone knows about Haiti. There are witches in this country, too, though they may not publicize themselves as such.” Dr. Wedeck said that “India’s full of fakirs and mystic writings and magic,” and he remarked, as a matter of curiosity, that “once a fakir in Calcutta predicted the next two weeks of my life precisely.”

“It’s old. It’s all so old,” Dr. Wedeck said, observing that he had recently read a book translated from a sixteenth-century manuscript, *Chin P’ing Mei*, which mentioned “witchcraft practices, astrological lore, and spells that were precisely those found in Theocritus and Vergil.”

“Vergil to a sixteenth-century Chinese text—that’s quite a jump isn’t it?” the interviewer said, to which the scholar gave this significant reply: “These beliefs are so pervasive that I feel they are not necessarily transmitted one to the other, but develop independently.”

It is important to catch the essence of that. It appears that these practices are *not transmitted* from culture to culture, but that they have sprung up spontaneously and independently. The same practices of witchcraft, magic, divination, and the worship of many gods or spirits are discovered in culture after culture between which there has been no human communication.

Dr. Wedeck rather weakly assigned this repetitive coincidence in practices, reaching across broad barriers of time and space and language, to a similarity in human thoughts. That misses the core of it. The fact is that these practices have their origin outside of the mind of man in a single supernatural source: Satan is their author. They are expressions of his religious purposes for mankind. These products of the genius of one mind are transmitted from the spiritual realm into the human realm.

Demons have access to every culture and it is in their power to communicate mysteries of Satan to individuals in each. These are devil-originated practices that have been separately revealed to various cultures by evil spirits from the earliest history of civilization.

That these practices are often identical is an evidence of their supernatural origin and design. They represent the will of Satan in offering human beings a variety of means by which they may seek help or guidance or something they desire, whether good or bad, from powers outside themselves. These powers are all demonic, and the use of any of these practices or means of worship links a man to the supernatural in a way that suits the purposes of Satan.

Certain it is that nearly identical religious ceremonies and trappings have been found in this century among tribes in South America, in Africa, and in the far Pacific. These tribes have never heretofore had contact with the outside world, but they have had contact with demons.

Witches and witch doctors are priests of Satan and they obtain certain powers from him. It is not surprising, as Dr. Wedeck said, that they often attempt "ruin and destruction," since those are exactly the purposes of Satan.

The interviewer told Dr. Wedeck, "Whenever I've read about witches and even in books like *Rosemary's Baby*, there always seem to be strong links between sorcery and sex—and very sick sex at that," to which Dr. Wedeck replied: "Well, witchcraft often attracted people of unbridled or frustrated sexual appetites. And even if you were possessed of neither, you couldn't be a witch unless you gave yourself completely to it. Which meant involving yourself with your coven—twelve disciples and the devil and the Sabbat [defined as "a secret rendezvous of witches and sorcerers for worshiping the devil, characterized by orgiastic rites, dances, feasting, etc."]. The Sabbat always had a ceremonial orgy, ending in a kind of communion, but sexual in nature, with the devil."

That, to say the least, is explicit. The devil desires worship above all else, and this is devil worship carried to the point of "communion" with Satan in orgiastic sex, through witchcraft.

The same issue of the magazine listed a score of books on witchcraft for young women to read, and recommended for "Absolutely dependable divination: A method you can live by," the *I Ching* or *Book of Changes*, a Chinese oracle. In this system of divination, over 3,000 years old, and now appearing in the United States

with much publicity, a person throws three coins six times and then, using the result in connection with a particular section of the book, receives guidance. Divination of any kind is part of a demonically revealed system by which men can put themselves in the hands of a higher intelligence for direction or help. The intelligence activating all devices of divination is that of Satan.

*Time* magazine did a cover story on the many eruptions of occultism in the American culture. Sybil Leek's *Diary of a Witch* was extensively reviewed in the mass media. These are but several examples out of a great many that have been brought to public attention of late. And witchcraft is just one of many varieties of Satanic supernaturalism that have been moving to the fore.

Public interest in such matters is rising, so much so that according to a report in *The New York Times*: "Harvard University's Coop, a huge merchandising mart on Harvard Square, recently opened a paperback book section for books on the occult. . . . Mr. [Roscoe] Fitts said that there had been an increase in interest in the occult, extrasensory perception, fortune-telling, numerology, and mind-expansion drugs in the last six months, enough to set up a new section that includes titles on witchcraft."

This is not an isolated phenomenon. It is becoming a national one, and the curiosity about such things runs highest among the young.

Witchcraft and magic, in spite of their widely assumed non-existence, are suddenly and prominently with us today. These things have not thronged upon the scene by any mere coincidence.

Satan, who could not foist such practices upon the American public while there was still at least the residue of a Biblical faith among the people, has now found the time ripe to bring these dark mysteries swarming in from the East to a decadent American culture.

It is all timed and carefully planned for the weakening of the society and the damaging of thousands in it, and it will increase rapidly among the people. It will only be reversed if there is an awareness of its source and an awakening to faith in the living God. The present tragedy of America is that it has long left the truths of the Scriptural faith on which many of its founders stood, and to which a majority of the people at least gave assent, and that is why America has lost its way.

In domestic and international affairs the nation staggers as though drunken. Its incapacity to devise effective policies is a reflection of the fact that the nation has cast aside the truth and has

gone after lies. The lies the population shows itself willing to swallow get bigger every year.

It is useful to make a close examination of patterns present in various forms of witchcraft, occultism, and false religion. Certain things crop up repeatedly among them. One of these is sex in crude or perverted or public expressions, particularly group sex or sex in religious rites. Sexual sins of the grossest kinds are spawned and promoted by Satan *in direct association with occult practices*. Satan loves to corrupt men sexually. He will do it by wholesale if possible.

Other strands running through the fabric of Satanic religious inventions include: the worship of sundry deities and gods; the obtaining of good luck by charms and the promotion of bad luck for enemies by spells; images; shrines; the sale and use of religious articles and objects; chanting and incantations; festivals; the use of incense or the burning of candles before statues and altars; the use of bells and gongs; beads and prayer wheels; obtaining blessings by purchase; dancing into a frenzy; berobed priests; the participation in mysteries through prescribed rituals; extremes of asceticism and of indulgence (in the Islamic observance of Ramadan, a strict fast is required from sunup to sunset, including sexual abstinence, but at night one may take his fill of the things avoided by day).

These and other things belong to the house of idolatry that Satan has set up for all mankind.

Those are *his* altars, not God's. They are *his* practices. This whole vast supermarket of magic, idolatry, and superstition is his substitute for the worship of the living God and for the placing of human trust in Him. God hates these substitutes with fury because He knows that they are devised as means of separating human souls from Him forever.

To those who have no knowledge of such matters the surge of interest in witchcraft and the like may seem to be a bit of a lark, a mild dabbling in the fantastic, a form of escapism, perhaps, in a crowded and perplexing age. What they fail to understand is that any of these ancient occult practices can open an avenue into the supernatural for a person who becomes involved in them. Young people who have a lively curiosity about, or a hunger for, supernatural reality have not the faintest notion of what they are getting into when they consent to go on such "trips."

Demons are able to produce a very wide variety of supernatural

effects for human beings, some of them seemingly quite lovely, others harrowing beyond description. They are real effects and they have real consequences of a practical kind. Practical, that is, from the standpoint of Satan, to whom death, disease, insanity, and addiction in men are wholly practical to his ends.

Any commerce with demons, under whatever auspices or designation, whether avowedly good or openly evil, can be costly and damaging beyond hope of repair for those who venture into it. Even a tentative step into this supernatural realm can be desperately dangerous. Yet now the means of introduction are everywhere readily available to the curious and unsuspecting.

I have said that there is nothing in the account of Gottlieb Dittus that does not have its counterpart in the current literature of magic and sorcery and spiritistic phenomena. Does money appear out of nowhere? Within the last month I have seen books on occultism advertised that boast of exactly this. There is an occult formula or practice for everything from which this woman so greatly suffered. These practices are known to some individuals, not merely by theory, but by direct experience. The Scriptures describe some of these mysteries as "the deep things of Satan" in Revelation 2:24.

Some young people are rushed into the demonic supernatural with startling speed. A friend told me a week ago of a young man he knows at work who participated in an experiment in group occultism. During the exercise he suddenly found himself set in a weird scene, as by a vision: He was walking in a long corridor between two rows of Buddha statues that were alive. This frightened him. He broke the spell of it and came back into reality. Almost immediately he had a different experience. He felt himself to be turned into a snake. He described in vivid detail the sensation he experienced as a snake. There was no physical change of any sort, of course, but his perception of himself was transformed by demons who were able to take him over, at least temporarily, because of his participation in the group exercise.

This young man's alarming experience with the Buddhas that seemed alive took him past the natural perception of a statue as a dead object to the fact that there is a direct relationship between religious statues and evil spirits. A statue is, of course, nothing but a dead object, but some demons identify themselves with particular statues and those demons produce the results that are sometimes obtained by addressing worship or prayers to such statues.

That is why sometimes certain statues, which do not look much different from others of their kind, obtain a special reputation for producing a certain kind of result.

The kind of experience this young man had probably would not have happened in the United States ten years ago, but it is likely to occur more and more as such group occult practices conduct young people directly into the realm of the demons.

Occultism and idolatry go together. There is a direct connection between idolatry and demonic supernaturalism, and Satan is the head of it all. It is all a part of his vast conspiracy to overthrow the worship of God.

Those who practice spiritism, so-called transcendental meditation, various kinds of mysticism, the black arts, magic, communication with the dead, psychicism, witchcraft, and many other kinds of demonic supernaturalism commonly use idols and other religious objects in their practices. All of this, whatever name it may bear, whatever guise it may wear, is Satanic in its origin.

Young Jews, adrift from their heritage, need to become aware of the destruction that they will incur to their minds, their bodies, and their souls and spirits by any traffic with these demonic inventions. To do exactly the opposite of what the Hebrew Scriptures command is to court destruction.

“You shall not practice augury or witchcraft. . . . Do not turn to mediums or wizards. Do not seek them out, to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 19:26b, 31.

(When he can get away with it, Satan puts terrible torments into rites of initiation and certain religious rites. Some demonic religions put a child through fire to purge it, a practice the Scriptures vehemently condemn. The purgation maimed many children and burned others to death. It is a Satanic religious devising for the harming of the young.)

“There shall not be found among you any one who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, any one who practices *divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer.*

“For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominable practices, the Lord your God is driving [the heathen nations] out before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God. For these nations, which you are about to dispossess, give heed to soothsayers and to diviners, but as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do so.” Deuteronomy 18:9-14.



“Do not defile yourself by any of these things, for by all these things the nations I am casting out before you defiled themselves. . . . But you shall keep my statutes and my ordinances, and *do none of these abominations.*

*“The persons that do them shall be cut off from among their people. So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs which were practiced before you, and never to defile yourself by them: I am the Lord your God.”* Leviticus 18:24–30.

*“A man or a woman who is a medium or a wizard shall be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones, their blood shall be upon them.”* Leviticus 20:27.

If God expressly expelled the Gentiles from Canaan because they had engaged in these demonic practices, and gave the land to the Jews, it is reasonable that if the Jews fell into these same practices, the anger of God would be greater against them for it, who had been told never to do them, than against Gentiles.

The people of Israel did drift into such evil religious practices. *“They went after false idols, and became false, and followed the nations that were around about them. . . . And they forsook all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made for themselves molten images . . . and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings, and used divination and sorcery, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger. Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight.”* II Kings 17:15b–18.

The same passage says that *“the Lord warned Israel and Judah . . . but they would not listen. . . . They despised his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and the warnings which he gave them.”*

The reigns of two kings at Jerusalem stand in contrast. One was Manasseh, the other Josiah. The character of each man was formed while he was in his teens, and it remained quite constant thereafter.

*“Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. . . . And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord . . . he erected altars for Baal, and made an Asherah . . . and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served them. . . . And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the house of the Lord. And he burned his son as an offering, and practiced soothsaying and augury, and dealt with mediums and with wizards. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger.*

“And the graven image of Asherah that he had made he set in the house of which the Lord said to David and to Solomon his son, ‘In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen, out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name forever. . . .’ But . . . Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations had done whom the Lord destroyed before the people of Israel.”

Manasseh followed Satan’s religious policy, not God’s. It brought much trouble to the nation. The religious sins of the king led him also to sins of violence. “Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other” with blood. II Kings 21:1–9, 16a.

The timing of the judgment of God is one thing of which men may rarely be sure. Some men are cut off early in their sins, even in youth, while others continue for what seems to be a long time. The Bible says that God “is not willing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” (II Peter 3:9b.) Manasseh reigned for fifty-five years. God knew that Manasseh would ultimately repent of his evil. The Scripture says, “He entreated the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. He prayed to him, and God received his entreaty and heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom [from captivity at Babylon]. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God.

“And he took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the Lord, and all the altars that he had built . . . and he threw them outside of the city. He restored the altar of the Lord . . . and commanded Judah to serve the God of Israel. Nevertheless, the people still sacrificed at the high places, but only to the Lord their God.” II Chronicles 33:12, 13, 15–17.

Josiah became one of the greatest kings among the Jews because of his fidelity to the commandments of the God of Israel. In his reign, evil religious practices were swept from the nation and righteousness held sway over sin.

“Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left. For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father, and in the twelfth year [when he was twenty years old] he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim and the graven and molten images. [He]

hewed down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel." II Chronicles 34:1-3, 7b.

"And the king commanded . . . the priests . . . to bring out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven. He burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel.

"And he deposed *the idolatrous priests* whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places . . . those also who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, and the moon, and the constellations, and all the host of the heavens.

And he brought out the Asherah from the house of the Lord. And he broke down the houses of the male cult prostitutes which were in the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the Asherah.

"And all the shrines of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which kings of Israel had made, provoking the Lord to anger, Josiah removed. . . . And he slew all the priests of the high places who were there. . . . Moreover Josiah put away

the mediums and the wizards  
the teraphim and the idols

and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and Jerusalem. . . . Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him." II Kings 23:4-8, 19a, 24, 25.

These ancient practices of occultism, divination, witchcraft, and false worship have not improved with age, nor have they changed much. The Word of God still stands against them because they are the work of an enemy.