

THE HAMMER OF WITCHES

In recent times, there has been a Satanist scare. Millions of religionists believed that the Satanists were abusing and sacrificing babies all over the place.

This was not the first time religion caused such hysteria.

Christian theology maintained that the Devil was the chief angel in Heaven before God chucked him out. It was believed that he retained the incredible powers his former role bestowed on him now that he was fallen and that he could help those who sold their bodies and souls to him to work great marvels in return for their sacrifices of sin.

Pope Gregory IX was the main force behind the revival in the belief that there were witches with awesome powers. They could ruin crops, or kill, or even turn into animals and fly through the air with the aid of the Devil. In 1231, he originated the Inquisition which was meant to eradicate witchcraft and heresy. A long-lasting orgy of violence and murder ensued.

Two Dominican monks, Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger wrote a book called *The Hammer of Witches* in 1486. It even claimed that witches could have babies by the Devil who employs artificial insemination! The book prescribed torture to make witches confess. The book called for their extermination. Incidentally, in an age approving of capital punishment one could only expect that people who were in league with the Devil and willing servants of his and having his power should be put to death. This book was granted official Church approval. Not surprisingly, since St Thomas Aquinas declared it heresy to assert that true witches did not have the power to change nature magically. The authors of the *Hammer* had been appointed by the infamous *Witches Bull* of 1484 which was written by Innocent VIII to extirpate witches and preach against them.

The Bible says that we must not suffer a sorceress or a witch to live (Exodus 22:17). Anybody who claimed to communicate with the dead and by implication other gods had to be put to death by stoning (Leviticus 20:27). Magic workers are excluded from the kingdom of Heaven (Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8). God even killed King Saul for consulting a spiritual medium (1 Chronicles 10:13).

The Bible also forbids the toleration of anybody who promotes the worship of other Gods. It commands their execution.

Back to the first declaration. A sorceress need not promote her faith so it is not that the law is worried about. The sorceress must be killed because she does spells. This seems senseless if she is a solitary witch so we can take it that the good book is saying that she has magical powers to do harm with them which justifies ending her life.

People would reason that if she or he has not started killing people by black magic she soon will and that justifies putting her on top of a bonfire.

Even if we are not sure of the import of the verse we have to slay witches to be on the safe side.

Never does the Bible say that powers of witchcraft are delusion. It never says that mediumistic powers are delusions. The witch of Endor made Samuel's ghost appear to King Saul. There is no evidence in the story that it was not the witch that did it but God alone. The story therefore says that mediums can make the dead speak.

The magicians Moses had to reckon with could transmute things with their magical arts. There is no hint that God gave the magicians the powers to show that Moses was stronger. The matter of fact way it was reported suggests that they always had those powers.

In Ezekiel 13, God condemns the wearing of magic bands. He does not say in this book that magic is a delusion so that proves that he meant that the magic is real. If a book speaks of thanking God and does not say that this isn't meant seriously then the book is saying that God really exists.

When the Bible speaks of soothsayers predicting lies it does not say that they are making it all up. Their powers could be deluding them.

What if we see no evidence for such miraculous powers today? The answer would be that the Devil is obsessed with secrecy and will not let such powers be proven except to the person who has them. He might show off with a possessed person but a possessed person is not necessarily a disciple of his. He might even let a disciple show off his magic in an

attempt to refute God's miracles.

The stories of possession in the Bible tell us that the Devil is very powerful. The Whore of the Book of Revelation who will be on earth before the return of Jesus has great magical powers. The Book of Revelation says that magic exists and it is real. Since Jesus told us we would not know when he would show up this forces Christians to believe that the world is in the grip of witches and black magic for he said that they would be epidemic before his second advent. All this tells us to kill witches. Their main concern would be to do magic to make a person sin and then kill her or him so that he or she goes to Hell forever. They would do it subtly and wouldn't want to make it too obvious. Proof that a witch has killed by her black arts is not necessary.

The miracles of the Bible are largely pointless. God should have done one big sign. So if God does senseless miracles then he lets the Devil work evil ones too. It would then be more likely that when a person testifies to a miracle that it has happened. If a person says he saw a witch taking off on her broomstick we would be obliged to believe it. The miracles imply that witchcraft is real and should be believed to be real. They imply that we should never have stopped torturing people and burning them at the stake for sorcery. The fact that the Old Testament did not need to command the destruction of witches and still did it proves that God regards such killings as intrinsically good. Even if Jesus abolished the capital punishment law for an adulteress in the dubious addition to John's gospel – which he did not if you read it right - that does not mean that he wanted witches to be permitted to live. Adultery breaks the way God wants society to be ordered but religious crimes are in a completely different category.

Finally, the witches like the witches of today bake cakes to worship their goddess the Queen of Heaven. The Bible says that this worship is forbidden (Jeremiah 7:18; 44).