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Satanism—Father Herbert Thurston, S. J., versus Mr. Montague Summers

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V (Conclusion)

Mr. Summers does not bring his treatise to a close when Thomas Alva Edison and the electric-arc lamp appear on his horizon. On the contrary, he brings the story of Satanism up to date and thus scores heavily against those who deny the supernatural. Monsters, such as Gilles de Rais, are not entirely unknown in this present age of "enlightenment." What is Spiritism, stripped of its frequent trickery, but the ancient necromancy? Bands of Satanists yet rifle tabernacles (while we deny we are making reparations for those desecrations in our churches!), celebrate Black Mass, and plot the subversion of Christian society even as they did in the days when the Cathari and the Manicheans flourished in southern France and northern Italy.

It is not a pleasant subject, but Mr. Summers was obliged to devote some attention to the dark mysteries of the Black Mass. Beginning with the twelfth century, when the heretic Tanchelm flourished in Antwerp, Mr. Summers cites many instances of horrible sacrileges and profanations of the Sacred Species. In more modern times, Charles IX of France, haunted without respite by the "ghosts" of his and his mother's victims, is said to have resorted to an especially atrocious method of evocation: the oracle of the bleeding head. In these abominable rites of the seventeenth century, it would appear, the blood of innocent children was offered by apostate priests such as Guibourg and Tournet, at the instance of Madame de Montespan, the mistress of Louis XIV, who aspired to be queen of France.

If some think it incredible that, at this very moment, Satan's "gospel" is being proclaimed in many a modern temple, I can point to the pronunciamientos of that dogmatist of Freemasonry, Gen. Albert Pike, who advised people to escape from the "Catholic hell" "by using the Devil himself as a monstrous lad-

der." (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 822). "By accepting the direct opposite of the Catholic dogma," Pike continues, the freed slave "reascends to the light." "We free ourselves," he proclaims, from the bondage of the "Catholic hell," by audacity." In these United States Pike is believed and obeyed by thousands of persons who refuse belief and obedience to Jesus Christ; and the jurisdiction over which he reigned, the Freemasonry which he made the implacable foe of the Catholic Church, is in full fellowship with Latin Freemasonry on the Continent, concerning the Satanic character of which there can be hardly any doubt.

Mr. Summers assures us that there are, at present time, assemblies of Satanists in every prominent city of Europe. There seems to be no lack of evidence to support this contention. Off-hand I can recall the names of half-a-dozen writers who have lately witnessed to the same effect. We have been reluctant to believe that human beings could descend to such depths of depravity as are portrayed by Huysmans in *Là-Bas*; but Mr. Summers tells us (and he specifies) that "it is common knowledge that the characters . . . were all persons easy of identification and the details are scenes exactly reproduced from contemporary life." (*History*, p. 151. *Geography*, p. 464, note, etc.)

I was disappointed not to find among the many instances of modern Satanism adduced by Mr. Summers some mention of Aleister Crowley and the O.T.O. Crowley has become internationally famous (or, rather, infamous) because of his rejection, not only of the Christian faith, but of the whole of Christian morality. He has a multitude of followers; and a study of this high-priest of Satanism and his movement would be valuable. Crowley is thoroughly consistent. In choosing for himself such titles as "Baphomet XI" and "The Beast," he is not merely making a histrionic gesture,--the choice is that of a confirmed Satanist, as may be seen from Crowley's principle works, *The World's Tragedy* and *The Equinox*.

In his remarks on Sinistrati, Father Thurston, . . .