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## On witchcraft By Elise L. Moore

She practiced witchcraft, what she called white magic. Her spells were for good and not intended as a curse, but she believed that evil was also real and powerful. In her personal life she was feeling more and more fearful, unhappy, as if she had no control over what happened to her. That's when she began talking to a Christian Scientist at her university.

The Christian Scientist spoke to her of the power of good: Good is not one of two opposing powers. Good is God, the only power. God is all-powerful divine Love, embracing and protecting each one of us.

At first, the girl still felt helpless, as if she were being dominated by forces beyond her control. Gradually, she began accepting that God exists, is good, and that she could reject fearful and unhappy thoughts on the basis of her relation to God. A complete change took place. She rejected witchcraft as a power for good or evil, regained a sense of dominion and peace, and was able to break free from fear of manipulative influences.

The practice of witchcraft is undergoing a revival as a nature religion. Similar belief systems are influential in Central and South America, Africa, and other parts of the world. The rituals, friendships, and a sense of control appeal to those who feel alienated from traditional Christian beliefs or who are rebelling against them. In the culture of witchcraft, Christianity is portrayed as a male-dominated religion. Witchcraft is often taught as a kind of feminism allied with the forces of nature or energy, which is channeled through the casting of spells. Evil is seen as equal to or more powerful than good.

Christ Jesus taught that God is Spirit (see John 4:24). Divine Spirit is not divided into spirits, nor does Spirit live in matter or material forms. Spirit is indivisible, one, the substance of being, which individuals reflect and express. The human concept that good and evil spirits exist and have power is a perversion of the grandeur and infinitude of divine Spirit and its expression.

Is divine Spirit male or female? The nature of God is Love, Truth, Life. Spirit, God, does not have gender. The fact that Spirit creates its image “male and female” is an indication of the all-inclusive nature of God rather than the gender of God. If we elevate thought above the biological to the spiritual, it is accurate to describe God as the one Father-Mother, the source of all creation.

God is good - not only the source of good, but the essence of good. Focusing on the vagaries of the material world, witchcraft would divert attention from the supremacy of good, the control of divine law, and instead emphasize a supposed power of human will or psychic energy. Misled in this way, some may believe they feel powerful and able to manipulate others, while others believe they are powerless and manipulated.

Recognizing good as the only power identifies evil as unproductive, a counterfeit. Evil is the belief in the absence of good. Rather than acquiesce in this lie, we should confidently affirm the all-presence and all-power of good. Apathy toward evil would paralyze goodness. To correct evil – either the fear of it or the belief that it can be practiced with some benefit – we can be vigorous in doing and thinking good. This is natural to each of us as God's reflection. The activity of good destroys evil.

Witchcraft and the power of Christ are like the tares and wheat in the Biblical parable.<sup>1</sup> Christ Jesus explained to his disciples, “The good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one...”<sup>2</sup> The original Greek word translated “wicked one” means one who is hurtful, evil in effect or influence. To believe in an opposing power or spirit called evil is not a source of strength or influence. It is useless, like the tares, which are weeds. At an early stage, tares look like wheat, but when they mature, they are recognizable as useless and unproductive, a counterfeit of wheat, having no value. So any thought systems that promote the belief that evil can be used to influence or affect others are counterfeit concepts of spirituality, lacking any reality or real power.

Spells, incantations, and some forms of meditation-the counterfeit of prayer-rely on belief in an energy of the human mind. Belief in witchcraft is a deification of human will. But human will is not divine power; nor is it an aspect of prayer. God's will is the unchanging, good, unalterable divine law, which knows no favorites. The law of good operates universally and impartially, blessing all

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<sup>1</sup> See Matt. 13:24-30

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 13:38

consistently. The effect of genuine prayer is to silence human demanding and conform our thought to God's moral and spiritual requirements. As our thought and life come into conformity with Christ, God's guidance and inspiration become clear to us.

Witchcraft may blame misfortune on unseen spirits, a curse, and so on. But these have no more power over anyone than a blindfold has over children playing a game. A blindfolded child may swing wildly at the pinata she cannot see. But at any moment, the blindfold can be removed, and the child will see clearly how to obtain the sweets. The blindfold of false beliefs, counterfeit practices, and human will is removed through Christ, the spiritual idea of God.

The experience of Paul in Thyatira illustrates the power of Christ over divination.<sup>3</sup> A young woman who made a living for herself and others through occult practices attached herself to Paul and began proclaiming his status as a servant of God. Paul recognized this perversion of prophecy. The woman was not acknowledging God's power or admitting the need to conform one's thoughts and actions to God, good. Her statements were designed to validate a personal ability as a mystic, diviner, or witch.

Paul finally turned and rebuked the belief in a power separate from God. Those who had used the woman's soothsayings for their gain saw their loss and had Paul and his colleague, Silas, arrested, beaten, and chained in prison. But the Christians did not speculate on whether they were being cursed. Rather, Paul and Silas steadfastly praised God and the power of good in song and prayer. The dramatic result was that at midnight, the prison doors opened for all the people in that prison and their chains fell off. The power of God was proved supreme at the very hour many associate with occult practices.

That same liberating power of divine Love is just as active today, as I found. Late one evening on going to bed, I suddenly could not move even a finger without excruciating pains shooting throughout my body. I prayed aloud "the scientific statement of being" from *Science and Health*. It states: "There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all. Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is

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<sup>3</sup> See Acts 16:16-40

God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual.”<sup>4</sup>

I thought of Mrs. Eddy's statement “The malicious aim of perverted mind-power, or animal magnetism, is to paralyze good and give activity to evil.”<sup>5</sup> I immediately turned my thought to God and began mentally affirming the presence of divine Spirit and the all-power and control of divine Mind right then and there.

During this time of calm prayer, I recalled an account I had read. A Christian Science practitioner and lecturer was returning from giving a public lecture on Christian Science. Suddenly he was struck deathly ill on the plane. It occurred to him that the people of the country where he had been lecturing maintained a strong belief in voodoo. He proceeded to rebuke the suggestion that voodoo could have power and was instantly healed.

Immediately, I corrected thoroughly any belief in curse, mental manipulation, or mind-control, mental malpractice, or an evil power. Rather than try to identify a specific person, group, or source for such malpractice, I affirmed that evil is never personal or personalized. I diligently prayed to see that there is only one Mind. It became so clear to me that God governs the thoughts of His children and that the only thoughts anyone could think were from God and were good. This, I realized, is the absolute truth of being. Even though it seemed unsupported by what one sees in the world, I accepted these spiritual facts as true.

My arm was getting cold, since it was outside the covers, so I decided to attempt to move it ever so gingerly. No pain. I was amazed. The change was dramatic and quick. I fell asleep contemplating the oneness, allness, and onliness of divine Mind and its ideas and woke completely free. In fact, in the morning I leapt out of bed and ran to answer the telephone in another room before remembering the acute paralysis of the night before. It had disappeared.

There is nothing to be frightened of or fascinated by in witchcraft. All the adventure and power of the ages is found in true spirituality, in God and the Christ-power, which heals the sick and sinning.

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<sup>4</sup> *Science and Health*, p. 468

<sup>5</sup> *The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 213