

## DIABOLUS SIMIA DEI

BY MAXIMILIAN RUDWIN

THE Devil is represented in Christian theology as a duplicate of the Deity. The Fiend in hell has been set up by the Church fathers as a foil to the Father in heaven. Lucifer has been limned by the Catholic Schoolmen after the Lord. The Adversary, in waging war against the Almighty, is understood to copy all of his acts and attributes. Popular tradition, moreover, asserts that the Devil, impotent to do anything original, has set his heart on aping everything created by the Deity. In Immermann's drama, *Merlin* (1832), Satan complains: "*Dass uns nichts bleibt als nachzuäffen*" (That nothing but imitating is left to us) (Prologue, 199).

The similarities between pagan and Christian belief and ritual were explained by the Church fathers as diabolical travesties of divine truths. When the early Christian missionaries discovered that the heathen rites and observances were identical with their own, they could explain the fact only by assuming that the Devil, in his efforts to pervert the truth, mimicked the exact details of the sacraments of the Lord in the mysteries of the idols. The doctors of the Church postulated the belief that, long before the advent of Christianity, Satan had put Christian ideas into the heads of the pagans in order to confound the faithful. The Church fathers assumed that, by overhearing the words of the inspired prophets, the Adversary had learned the intentions of the Almighty and had anticipated them by a series of blasphemous imitations (Justin Martyr: *Apologia* i. 54). From the identity of Mithraic and Judaic baptismal rites, Tertullian was led to declare that "Satan imitates the sacraments of God" and "goes about to apply to the worship of the idols those very things of which the administration of Christ's sacraments con-

sists." Referring to the Mithraic eucharist, Justin Martyr also maintained that Satan had plagiarized this ceremony, causing the worshippers of Mithra to receive the consecrated bread and cup of water<sup>1</sup> in imitation of the followers of Christ. St. Augustine similarly saw the subtlety of Satan's power of imitation in the parallel between the observances of Christians and pagans. Even Cortés, the famous Spanish explorer, who conquered Mexico in the sixteenth century, complained that Lucifer had positively taught the Mexicans the same things which the Lord had taught the Christians. Thus the similarities in creed and cult between Christianity and paganism were interpreted by the Church as infernal counterfeits of eternal verities.

The early Christians further believed that Lucifer, in his efforts to copy the Lord, actually pronounced oracles and worked miracles among the pagans, but that when God brought his miraculous displays of power to an end, the Devil was no longer permitted to perform prodigies among the pagans, either. The Church did not doubt the supernatural power of the idols but ascribed its source to the Devil's aim to counterfeit the Deity with a view of confounding the Christians. "But the fundamental cause (*consummativa*) [of idolatry]," affirms St. Thomas Aquinas in his work, *Summa theologica* (II. ii. 94), "must be sought in the devils, who caused men to adore them under the form of idols, working in them certain things which excited their wonder and admiration." Even Edmund Spenser, writing in the sixteenth century, described the Devil as dwelling beneath the altar of an idol in a heathen temple and, in its name, uttering oracles and performing miracles.

\* \* \*

In every other respect, Lucifer was represented by the fathers and doctors of the Church as a replica of the Lord, as the unholy counterfeiter of all things divine, playing in the world the part of "God's ape." The triceptic form, which the Devil inherited from the pagan gods of the underworld, was interpreted by the Church as his parody of the tripersonality of the Godhead. Lucifer, in imitation of the Lord, wears a long beard in the iconography of the Eastern Church. The Devil's diadem is the counterpart of the Creator's crown. As Jehovah has "principality, and power, and might and dominion" (Eph. i. 21), Satan is the possessor of "prin-

<sup>1</sup> Water was used instead of wine by certain early Christian sects.

cialities and powers" (*ibid.*, vi. 12). If God is the father of truth, the Devil is the father of lies (John viii. 44). The sons of Belial (Jdg. xx. 13; cf. John viii. 44) parallel the children of God (John viii. 42; 1 John iii. 10).

If Spirit emanated from God, Matter was formed by the Fiend. It was a Gnostic notion to regard the whole world of objective existence as the work of the Devil. The Church adopted this view and considered all nature as the incarnation of the Evil Spirit. In fact, the Devil was looked upon down to the sixteenth century as in some sort the creator and controller of the physical order of things. The world, the flesh and the Devil are joined together in the formula of Christian baptism. Although the Catholic catechism does not contain this belief, it formed the principal doctrine of many heterodox sects. The Priscillianists, an ascetic and Gnostic sect of the fifth century, had for their central belief that the world was created by the Devil. They abstained as much as they could from all contact with the material world and rejected many foods as coming from the Devil.<sup>2</sup>

If God created man, Satan created woman.<sup>3</sup> The Manichæans held the belief that woman was fashioned by the Devil, and that the forbidden fruit with which the Serpent tempted Adam was woman herself.<sup>4</sup> When Adam was created (so runs the teaching of Mani), the Devil, wishing to show that he could equal and perhaps even surpass the Deity in creative power, fashioned Eve, who, in contrast to Adam, was wholly sensual, and thus soon caused Adam to sin through carnal lust. According to another Gnostic belief, Adam was likewise the handiwork of the Evil One, who fashioned him as well as Eve out of dust. Adam, however, had a spark of light in him, inasmuch as Satan, in previous struggles with the good angels, had obtained from them some elements of light

<sup>2</sup> Gœthe and Hebbel shared this belief in the Devil as the creator of the world; consult the present writer's essay: "Des Teufels Schöpferrolle bei Gœthe und Hebbel" in *Neophilologus*, vol. VI (1918-19), pp. 319-22. Anatole France, in his work, *la Rôtisserie de la Reine Pédauque* (1893), also expresses the belief that a demon has created the world.

<sup>3</sup> The Devil is at least the dispenser of charms to women. The famous courtesan of Alexandria maintains that if she is so beautiful it is because the Devil adorned her with all her attractions (Anatole France: *Thais*, 1890).

<sup>4</sup> The apple-story in Genesis is thus interpreted as an allegory. "Love," says Henry O'Brien in his book, *The Round Towers of Ireland* (1834), "however disguised, and how could it be more beautifully than by the scriptural penman—love, in its literal and all-absorbing seductiveness, was the simple and fascinating aberration couched under the figure of the forbidden fruit."

and passed them on into Adam's nature. Eve, on the other hand, was wholly sensual and consequently could not fail soon to bring about Adam's fall.

If the Lord created the human soul, Lucifer, according to the belief of the Albigenes, fashioned the human body as a prison for the celestial soul. Even if the upper parts of the body were created by God, its inferior parts, according to the belief of other heretical sects, were made by the Devil. The Paternians, who held this belief and who wished to render to both their creators what was theirs, indulged to their hearts' content in eating and drinking and debauching themselves.

If God is the creator of beauty, ugliness is, according to the French novelist Joris-Karl Huysmans, the Devil's handiwork (*les Foules de Lourdes*, 1906).

As heaven is the habitation of the Most High, hell is the dwelling of the Devil. The Christian hell of pitch and brimstone is the counterpart of the Hebrew heaven of gold and precious stones. The scarlet gates of Gehenna form a striking contrast to the pearly portals of paradise. The Devil, who has always wished to rival the Deity, has developed his domain in all details after the pattern of the celestial organization. Each infernal institution is copied from a corresponding eternal establishment. The diabolical monarchy was founded in opposition to the celestial kingdom. The hierarchy of hell was formed in imitation of the hierarchy of heaven. The infernal council was instituted in imitation of the celestial assembly described in the Old Testament (1 Kings xxii. 19; 2 Chr. xviii. 18; Job i. 6, ii. 1).

The malignant spirits form a contrast to the benignant spirits. The seven demons of royal rank match the seven archangels. Satan holding the keys of hell is a pendant to St. Peter, the warden of the celestial portals. The Eternity of Sorrows in hell, a creation of Chateaubriand in his novel, *les Martyrs* (1809), is the infernal counterpart to the Augustinian *æternitas felicitatis*. Hornblas, the demon, who, in the German medieval mysteries, blows the horn or Tartarean trumpet to call together the demons of hell for a session of parliament, is the diabolical counterpart of the Angel of the Last Trumpet. The functions of the fiends in hell parallel the rôles of the bright spirits in heaven. As the latter specialize in virtues, the former particularize in vices. As each angel is set over a good act,

each demon is allotted an evil deed. As the angels sing hosannah in the highest, the demons pour forth pæans of praise to the Prince of the Pit. The choir of the angels in the medieval mysteries has for its counterpart a choir of demons. The spirits of hell even parody the prayers addressed to the Lord in heaven. According to Cæsarius of Heisterbach, the Devil does not even refrain from reciting in a burlesque fashion the *Paternoster* and the *Credo*. In imitation of the supernal spirits, the infernal hosts sing the *Silete* in the French medieval mysteries. Beelzebub, as chaplain to Venus, the goddess of voluptuousness, in Gil Vicente's play, *Triumpho do inverno* (1530), offers a parody of the breviary hymns for the amusement of the pious Portuguese spectators.

As the Lord works for the extension of his kingdom on earth, Lucifer also endeavors to extend his power on this planet. As the Almighty sends his angels down in order that his will be done on earth as it is in heaven, the Adversary dispatches his demons to effect his will among the children of man. The intervention of the demons in human affairs parallels that of the angels. Inasmuch as the spirits of darkness are incessantly plotting the ruin of men, the spirits of light are continually intent upon saving them. As the angels of heaven must answer to the formulas of invocation pronounced by those who have made a sacramental compact with their chief, the infernal agents can be summoned by those who have shared a sacrament with Satan. If the messengers from heaven are the guards and sentries of men, the agents of hell act as their tempters and tormentors. If the good spirit whispers good counsel into man's right ear, the evil demon whispers evil counsel into the left.

As the Lord has his elect, so Lucifer has his chosen. "The Devil has his elect" as well as the Deity, the devout George Herbert assures us. As the Creator closes a covenant with his faithful, his copyist enters into a pact with his adherents. If the bond with the Eternal is concluded with water, the pact with the Infernal is signed with blood. Satan as well as the Saviour demands from his subjects an act of deep devotion and a declaration of loyalty. "*Dæmones dicinis honoribus gaudent*," says St. Augustine (*De Civitate Dei*, x). If the Deity spreads grace on his people, the Devil distributes evil spells among his devotees. If the men of the Lord do good and practice charity, the followers of the Fiend do evil and spread hatred. As

the Deity distributes crowns of gold to his elect (Rev. ii. 10; cf. Pet. v. 4), the Devil in the medieval mysteries rewards his deserving demons with crowns composed, however, of far ignobler substances.

\* \* \*

The synagogue of Satan (Rev. ii. 9) is the counterpart of the Church of God.<sup>5</sup> No sooner is a temple erected to the Deity than the Devil builds a chapel near by. There is a Spanish proverb to the effect that "Where God has his church, Satan will have his chapel." The Spaniards also say, "Detras de la cruz está el diablo" (Behind the Cross is the Devil). In the words of Daniel Defoe: "Wherever man erects a house of prayer, the Devil always builds a chapel."

Sweden, and the North in general, fairly swarm with the synagogues of Satan. It is believed that the Devil has a church in the village of Elfdale, situated in Sweden. The "cursed tower" of Vygla in Iceland, mentioned in Victor Hugo's juvenile novel, *Han d'Islande* (1823), was believed to be "the oratory of the Devil."

The adoration of the Devil is the obverse of the worship of the Deity. The rites of hell, mentioned in Victor Hugo's novel, just cited, correspond to the sacraments of heaven.<sup>6</sup> The ceremonies of the devil-worshippers were considered as blasphemous travesties of the blessed sacraments of the Church of God. Satan as well as Jehovah has his ministers (2 Cor. xi. 15), who perform his sacraments. The *magica diabolica* or *magica nigra* is in contrast to the *magica alba*. Sacred days, as is well known, are printed in the Catholic calendar with red letters, and the Devil also employs them in the books of black magic. The "Devil's mark," found on the wizards and witches, is the counterpart of the Lord's baptism. Tertullian has already said that the Devil, as the ape of the Deity, practises baptism on his subjects. The "Flying Ointment," with which the witches rub themselves in preparation for their mid-air flights to the Sabbath, is an obverse of the seventh Christian sacrament. The stick, which serves them as a steed, is, according to Arias Mon-

<sup>5</sup> The noted German-Polish novelist Stanislaw Przybyszewski, author of *Homo Sapiens* (1895-98), has written a novel in German under the title *Die Synagoge Satans* (1897). Adolf Paul has composed a comedy entitled *Die Teufelskirche* (Berlin, 1915). The novel, *The Devil's Chapel*, has Miss Sophie Cole for its author.

<sup>6</sup> A description of the ritual at the infernal court was given by Hroswitha, a nun of Gandersheim in Germany, who lived in the tenth century.

tano, the diabolical counterpart to the rod of Moses and the budding rod of Aaron (Numb. xvii. 2). The Black Mass is "a blasphemous parody of the Blessed Mass." The Devil assists with the Black Mass, just as the Lord is present at the Holy Eucharist. As candles burn before the altar of God, lights are carried in front of the Devil, as he performs the rites of the Witches' Sabbath. The table and cup used in the sacrament of Satan (1 Cor. x. 21) correspond to those employed in the sacrament of the Saviour. A Basque legend tells us that the Devil makes his chalice out of the parings of fingernails trimmed on Sundays. Another instance of the mimicry of the sanctities of the Church by "God's Ape" is the belief that the Devil exacts from the witches a kiss on an ignominious part of his body in imitation of the kiss of charity with which the early Christians greeted each other (1 Pet. v. 14).

Man can be as devout with respect to the Devil as in the worship of the Deity, says Victor Hugo in *Actes et Paroles*: "Depuis l'exil" (II. xvi). "In more ways than one," says St. Augustine, "do men sacrifice to the rebellious spirits" as well as to the Heavenly Powers. According to Biblical authority, man can drink of the cup and be a partaker of the table of Lucifer as well as of the Lord (1 Cor. x. 21). Sinners can obtain indulgences from Satan as well as from the Saviour. "There are some consciences so tender," says Victor Hugo, "that they must seek indulgences even from Beelzebub. They wish to be irreproachable even in the eyes of Satan. Sins against the Devil exist in certain morbid imaginations" (*les Travailleurs de la mer*, 1866). The sins against Satan, of which Victor Hugo writes, parallel the crimes against the Creator. The doctrines of the devils (1 Tim. iv. 1) correspond to the precepts of the priests.

As God is always nigh unto them who call upon him, so Satan always appears when summoned. "Lucifer," says Richardson in *Pamela* (1740), "always is ready to promote his work and workmen." The proverb says: "Call the Devil, and he will come or send." The Devil as well as the Deity lends his ears to the prayers addressed to him by man in need. What the Lord has refused him, man seeks to obtain from Lucifer. He may even address himself directly to the Devil. Northern belief leans to the idea that man has a better chance of getting a hearing in hell than in heaven.



There is a significant saying among the Danish and Prussian peasants to the effect that you may obtain a favor by calling on the Deity, but that if you wish to be sure of getting what you want, you must deal with the Devil. An ancient tradition exists in Northern Europe that the Antecessor, as the Devil is called in a certain Swedish myth, is present to hold out promises where the Intercessor has broken all that his sponsors had made for him when the populace accepted his baptism.<sup>7</sup>

\* \* \*

Satan as *simia Salvatoris* also has a mother, who, as Queen of Hell, is the exact copy of the Queen of Heaven. This *Mater tenebrarum*—Our Lady of Darkness—is the counterpart of the *Mater dolorosa*—Our Lady of Sorrows. The infernal madonna appears in the *Juttaspiel*, the most famous secular play of medieval Germany, as Lilith, Adam's original paramour. This Mater malorum was the first to claim that woman was essentially man's equal and left her husband on account of his old-fashioned ideas about the husband's right to be head of the family. In the Alsfeld Passion Play, dating from the end of the fifteenth century, this "diabo-lady" is called Höllenkrücke (hell's crutches) on account of a lameness, which forces her to walk on crutches. In James Huneker's story, "The Vision Malefic" (1920), this counterfeited madonna appears on a Christmas Eve to the organist of a Roman Catholic church in New York.

The idea of the Devil's grandmother, on the other hand, is wholly foreign to Judeo-Christian tradition.<sup>8</sup> It belongs to Germanic belief. Satan's grandmother is none other than Grendel's granny mentioned in *Beowulf*.<sup>9</sup> The Christian Devil has simply usurped the place of the Anglo-Saxon monster in his grandmother's affections as well as in the popular mind. The Devil's grandmother is called Freya in North Germany, having been named after the Scandinavian goddess. She has also been identified with Hecate, the classical goddess of magic and witchcraft (Heine: "Ich rief den Teufel und er kam," 1824).

<sup>7</sup> In Maurice Magre's recent novel, *Lucifer*, the Devil says: "I give what I undertake to give. God promises much and gives nothing."

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Juilius Lippert: *Christentum, Volksglaube und Volksbrauch*, Berlin, 1882, p. 561.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Jacob Grimm: *Teutonic Mythology*. Transl. from the German (4 vols., London, 1880-1888), p. 986.



The Germans also knew of "the giant's old grandmother" and of "the mother or grandmother of earth." The Romans similarly had a mother or grandmother of ghosts.<sup>10</sup> The Devil's grandmother is in reality a degraded form of the Germanic goddess of fertility and domestic activity, whose symbols were the pitch-fork, the plough, the broom and the spindle.<sup>11</sup> This association accounts for the prominent part these implements play in medieval demonology. The witch, who was a degraded priestess of the ancient goddess of fertility, used the broom as a mount when she rode through the air to the Witches' Sabbath. The Devil himself is often represented with a pitch-fork or a broom in his hands. The Devil's pitch-fork is not the forked scepter of Pluto, to which a tine has later been added, as is commonly assumed. It is the ancient symbol of fertility, which is still employed as a fertility charm by the Hindus in India and the Zuñi and Aztec Indians of North America and Mexico. A related symbol is the trident of Poseidon or Neptune. The Devil often carried a besom on the medieval stage. This fact leads Mr. Chambers<sup>12</sup> to identify the Devil in some English mystery-plays with the chimney-sweep in others, especially since both are black-faced.<sup>13</sup>

We do not know much about the Devil's grandfather, but in a well known German fairy-tale he is called Old Night, and Beelzebub swears by his grandfather's horns in Charles Deulin's story, "le Grand choleur" (1874).

\* \* \*

The Devil, in imitation of the Deity, will toward the end of days send his son to men. Antichrist as the foil of Christ (2 Thess. ii. 3-10) will, according to Bellarmine, Suarez, Malvenda and *tutti*

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Sir James Frazer: *The Golden Bough* (London, 1890-1915), VIII, 94, 96, 107.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Karl Pearson: *The Chances of Death and Other Studies in Evolution* (2 vols., London, 1897), II, 28.

<sup>12</sup> E. K. Chambers: *The Mediæval Stage* (2 vols., Oxford, 1903), I, 214-5.

<sup>13</sup> On the German legends of the Devil's grandmother, the reader is referred first of all to the two articles by Eduard Lehmann: "Fandens oldemov" in *Dania. Tidsskrift dansk sprog og litteratur samt folkeminder*, vol. VIII (1901), pp. 179-94, and "Teufels Grossmutter" in the *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, vol. VIII (1905), pp. 411-30. The following books and magazine articles will be of further interest: Saintine: *la Mythologie du Rhin et les contes de la Mère-Grand* (1862); A. Götze: "Des Teufels Grossmutter" in the *Zeitschrift für deutsche Wortforschung*, vol. VII (1905-6), pp. 28-35; and Isabel C. Chamberlain: "The Devil's Grandmother" in the *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, vol. XIII (1900), pp. 278-80.

*quanti*, be born of a Babylonian virgin and the Devil, just as Christ was born of a Palestinian virgin and the Holy Ghost.

It is thus evident that the Devil has always been striving to equal the Deity in each and every detail of character and conduct. The designation of *simia Dei* given Diabolus by the Church fathers is thus well deserved.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup>The idea of Satan as a parody of God will also be found in Mark Twain's posthumous romance, *The Mysterious Stranger*. For further discussion of the subject of *Diabolus simia Dei*, *Satan simia Salvatoris*, *Lilith simia Mariae* and *dæmones simæ angelorum*, the reader is referred to the present writer's monograph, *Der Teufel in den deutschen geistlichen Spielen des Mittelalters und der Reformationszeit* (Göttingen, 1915), pp. 128ff.