

# When DARKNESS FALLS

INVESTIGATING RELIGION'S HISTORY OF EVIL

## Part 4: Witch Hunts

The history of religious institutions has been such an abysmal panorama of bigotry, persecution and cruelty that I can see why it could lead someone to wish to be rid of the whole business.

~ Roy Clouser, *Knowing with the Heart: Religious Experience & Belief in God*

More wars have been waged, more people killed, and these days more evil perpetrated in the name of religion than by any other institutional force in human history.

~ Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*

Men never do evil so completely cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.

~ Blaise Pascal, *Philosopher*

With or without religion, good people behave well and bad people can do evil, but for good people to do evil – that takes religion.

~ Steven Weinberg, *Nobel Laureate*

More people have been killed in the name of Jesus Christ than any other name in the history of the world.

~ Gore Vidal

Religion is a falcon with which to hunt.

~ Ancient Arab Proverb

Wretched creatures are compelled by the severity of the torture to confess things they have never done... and so by the cruel butchery innocent lives are taken.

~ Father Cornelius Loos, 1592

By frequent torture and the hideous squalor of their dark dungeons they are made to gladly exchange at any moment this most bitter existence for death and so are willing to confess whatever crimes are suggested to them.

~ Physician serving in witch prisons

Innocent have I come into prison, innocent have I been tortured, innocent must I die. For whoever comes into the witch prison must be tortured until he invents something out of his head. They hoisted me up on the *strappado* eight times, dislocating my shoulders and causing me so much pain I thought heaven and earth were at an end. Because of that and the thumbscrews, causing blood to run out at the nails and unbearable pain, I made my confession. But you must know, it was all a lie.

~ Johannes Junius, 1628

*Letter to his daughter, smuggled out of witches prison*

Most of what became known as witchcraft was old wives tales, invented by Christians.

~ Helen Ellerbe, *The Dark Side of Christian History*

**Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Spend your time and energy in training yourself for spiritual fitness.**

~ 1 Timothy 4:7 (NLT)

**Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end.**

~ Hebrews 12:2 (TEV)