

Thaumatrographia Pneumatica

*(The Wonders of
the
Spirit World)*

Cotton Mather (1663-1729)

Thaumatographia Pneumatica (*The Wonders of the Spirit World*)

Cotton Mather (1663-1729)
from Magnalia Christi Americana

Introduction

Relating the Wonders of the Invisible World in Preternatural Occurrences

Miranda cano, sed sunt credenda.

[The themes I sing are marvellous, yet true.]

When two goats were offered unto the Lord (and only unto the Lord) on the day of expiation, among the ancient Israelites, we read that one of them was to fall by lot to Azazel. Azazel cannot, without some hardship on the sense, be taken for the name of the scapegoat itself: But it is no other than the name of the Devil himself, as might easily be proved from the monuments of the greatest (both Jewish and Christian) antiquities.

In the signification of the word Azazel, there is indeed a notable declaration of those two properties that have signalized the devil; his being first a powerful (brave), and then an apostate (fleeing) spirit. The scapegoat, presented as a sacrifice unto the holy God, was ordered by him to be delivered up unto Azazel upon these two intentions. One design hereof might be to intimate unto the people what would be the miserable condition of them who did not by faith in the Messiah get the guilt of their own sins removed. They that have their sins lying upon them, and are "led forth with the workers of iniquity," must become a prey to Azazel, even to Satan, unto whose temptations they did, in their sinning, yield obedience. And indeed our Lord has expressly told us (perhaps not without some allusion to this levitical goat) that he will send the goats which have their sins upon them to be with the "Devil and his angels."

But another and a greater design of it might be to represent a main article in the dreadful sufferings which were to befall our Lord Messiah when he should come to suffer for our sins. When our Lord Jesus Christ underwent his humiliation for us, this point was very considerable in it; he was carried into the wilderness and there he was exposed to the buffetings and outrages of Azazel. The assaults that Satan then and afterwards made on our Lord Jesus Christ, producing a most horrible anguish in his mind, made such a figure in his conflicts for us, that they were well worthy of a most particular prefiguration. And one thing in the prefiguration must be that the goat for Azazel must be sent into the desert. In the days of Moses, it seems, deserts were very much considered an habitation of devils: Yea, they really were what they were counted, and for that cause the names of *Shedim*

and *Zijim* were put upon them, and when the Scriptures foretell desolations to such and such places, they still make the devils to be their inhabitants.

Who can tell whether the envy of the devils, at the favor of God unto men, may not provoke them to affect retirement from the sight of populous and prosperous regions, except so far as they reckon their work of tempting mankind necessary to be carried on? Or perhaps it is not every country before which the devils prefer the desert. Regions in which the devils are much served by those usages, either in worship or in manners which are pleasing to them, are by those doleful creatures enough resorted unto. Yea, if sin so much abound anywhere, some devils entreat that they may "not be sent from thence into the wilderness." But regions like the land of Israel, where the true God is continually prayed unto, and where the word of God is continually sounding, are filled with such things as are very uneasy unto the devils: The devils often recede much from thence into the wilderness, as the devil of Mascon would say to Mr. Perreaud, the minister that lived in the haunted house, "While you fo to prayer, I'll take a turn in the street."

Thus to omit what Alexander Hales reports of one retiring to uninhabitable places, where the spirits taught him the things which he wrote in his book *De Magicis (On Magic)*, we know that in Lucian the famous magician Mithrobarzanes, with his companions, betook themselves "into a desert, woody, shady region" for a conversation with spirits.

Whatever becomes of the observation which we have hitherto been making, there has been too much cause to observe that the Christians who were driven into the American desert, which is now called New England, have to their sorrow seen Azazel dwelling and raging there in very tragical instances. The devils have doubtless felt a more than ordinary vexation from the arrival of those Christians with their sacred exercises of Christianity in this wilderness, but the sovereignty of Heaven has permitted them still to remain in the wilderness for our vexation, as well as their own.

Molestations from evil spirits, in more sensible and surprising operations than those finer methods -- wherein they commonly work upon the minds of men, but especially ill men -- have so abounded in this country that I question whether any one town has been free from sad examples of them. The neighbors have not been careful enough to record and attest the prodigious occurrences of this importance which have been among us. Many true and strange occurrences from the invisible world, in these parts of the world, are faultily buried in oblivion. But some of these very stupendous things have had their memory preserved in the written memorials of honest, prudent, and faithful men whose veracity in the relations cannot, without great injury, be questioned.

Of these I will now offer the public some remarkable histories; for everyone of which we have had such a sufficient evidence that no reasonable man in this whole country ever did question them, and it will be unreasonable to do it in any other. For my own part, I would

be as exceedingly afraid of writing a false thing as of doing an ill thing, but has my pen always moved in the fear of God.

The First Example

Ann Cole, a person of serious piety, living in the house of her godly father in Hertford in the year 1662, was taken with very strange fits, wherein her tongue was improved by a daemon to express things unknown to herself.

The general purpose of the discourse, which held sometimes for a considerable while, was that such and such persons (named in the discourse) were consulting how they might carry on mischievous designs against her and several others by afflicting their bodies or destroying their good names, upon all which the general answer heard among these invisible speakers was, "Ah! She runs to the rock!" After such an entertainment had held for some hours, the daemons were heard saying, "Let us confound her language that she may tell no more tales." Whereupon the conference became unintelligible to the standers-by and then it passed in a Dutch tone, giving therein an account of mischiefs that had befallen divers persons and, among the rest, what had befallen to a woman that lived next neighbor to a Dutch family then in the town, which woman had been prematurely indisposed.

Several eminent ministers wrote the speeches of the spirits thus heard in the mouth of this Ann Cole, and one of the persons therein mentioned as active in the matter then spoken of (whose name was Greensmith), being then in prison on suspicion of witchcraft, was brought before the magistrates. The ministers now reading to her what they had written, she, with astonishment, confessed that the things were so and that she, with other persons named in the papers, had familiarity with a devil. She said that she had not yet made a formal covenant with her devil, but only promised that she would go with him when he called her, which she had sundry times done accordingly, and that he told her that at Christmas they would have a merry meeting and then the agreement between them should be subscribed.

She acknowledged the day following that, when the ministers began to read what they did, she was in such a rage that she could have torn them to pieces and she was resolved upon the denial of her guilt, but after they had read a while she was as if her flesh were pulled from her bones and she could no longer deny what they charged upon her. She declared that her devil appeared unto her first in the shape of a deer skipping about her and at last proceeded so far in that shape to talk with her and that the devil had frequently carnal knowledge of her.

Upon this confession, with other concurrent evidence, the woman was executed and other persons accused made their escape, whereupon Ann Cole was happily delivered from the extraordinary troubles wherewith she had been exercised.

The Second Example

In the town of Groton, one Elizabeth Knapp was taken (October, 1671) after a very strange manner, sometimes weeping, sometimes laughing, sometimes roaring with violent agitations, crying out, "Money! Money!" Her tongue would be for many hours together drawn like a semi-circle up to the roof of her mouth so that no fingers applied unto it could remove it. Six men were scarce able to hold her in some of her fits; she would skip about the house, yelling and howling and looking hideously.

On December 17 -- her tongue being drawn out of her mouth to an extraordinary length -- a daemon began manifestly to speak in her, for many words were distinctly uttered wherein are the labial letters, without any motion of her lips at all. Words also were uttered from her throat sometimes when her mouth was wholly shut, and sometimes words were uttered when her mouth was wide open but no organs of speech used therein.

The chief things that the daemon spoke were horrid railings against the godly minister of the town, but sometimes he [the daemon] likewise belched out most nefarious blasphemies against the God of heaven. And one thing about this young woman was yet more particularly remarkable: She cried out in her fits that a certain woman in the neighborhood appeared unto her and was the only cause of her affliction.

The woman thus cried out upon was doubtless an holy, devout, and virtuous person and she, by the advice of her friends, visited the afflicted. The possessed creature -- though she was in one of her fits and had her eyes wholly shut -- when this innocent woman was coming, she discovered herself wonderfully sensible of it and was in grievous agonies at her approaches. But this innocent woman, thus accused and abused by a malicious devil, prayed earnestly with, as well as for, this possessed creature, whereupon, coming to herself, she confessed that she had been deluded by Satan and compelled by him unreasonably to think and speak evil of a good neighbor without cause.

After this there was no complaint of such an one's apparition, but she said some devil, in the shape of divers, did very diversely and cruelly torment her, and then told her it was not he, but they, that were her tormentors.

The Third Example

In the year 1679 the house of William Morse at Newberry was infested with daemons after a most horrid manner, not altogether unlike the daemons of Tedworth. It would fill many pages to relate all the infestations, but the chief of them were such as these:

Bricks and sticks and stones were often, by some invisible hand, thrown at the house, and so were many pieces of wood; a cat was thrown at the woman of the house and a long staff danced up and down in the chimney. Afterwards, the same long staff was

hanged by a line and swung to and fro, and when two persons laid it on the fire to burn it, it was as much as they were able to do with their joint strength to hold it there.

An iron crook was violently, by an invisible hand, hurled about, and a chair flew about the room until at last it lit upon the table where the meat stood ready to be eaten and had spoiled it all, if the people had not with much ado saved a little.

A chest was, by an invisible hand, carried from one place to another, and the doors barricaded, and the keys of the family taken -- some of them from the bunch where they were tied and the rest flying about with a loud noise of their knocking against one another.

For one while the the folks of the house could not sup quietly, but ashes would be thrown into their suppers and on their heads and their clothes; the shoes of one man being left below, one of them was filled with ashes and coals and thrown up after him.

When they were abed, a stone weighing about three pounds was divers times thrown upon them. A box and a board was likewise thrown upon them, and a bag of hops, being taken out a chest, they were, by the invisible hand, beaten therewith 'til some of the hops were scattered on the floor, where the bag was then laid and left.

The man was often struck by that hand with several instruments, and the same hand cast their good things into the fire. Yea, while the man was at prayer with his household a beesom gave him a blow on his nead behind and fell down before his face. When they were winnowing their barley, dirt was thrown at them, and assaying to fill their half bushel with corn, the foul corn would be thrown in with the clean so irresistibly that they were forced thereby to give over what they were about.

While the man was writing his inkhorn was, by an invisible hand, snatched from him, and being able nowhere to find it, he saw it at length drop out of the air down by the fire. A shoe was laid upon his shoulder, but when he would have caught it, it was rapt from him. It was then clapped upon his head, and there he held it so fast that the unseen fury pulled him with it backward on the floor. He had his cap torn off his head, and in the night he was pulled by the hair and pinched and scratched and the invisible hand pricked him with some of his awls and with needles and bodkins, and blows that fetched blood were sometimes given him. Frozen clods of cow dung were often thrown at the man, and his wife, going to milk the cows, they could by no means preserve the vessels of milk from the like annoyances, which made it fit only for the hogs.

She going down into the cellar, the trapdoor was immediately, by an invisible hand, shut upon her and a tbale brought and laid upon the door, which kept her there until the man removed it.

When he was writing another time, a dish went and leapt into a pail and cast water on the man and on all the concerns before him so as to defeat what he was then upon. His cap jumped off his head and on again, and the pot lid went off the pot into the kettle, then over the fire together.

A little boy belonging to the family was a principle sufferer in these molestations, for he was flung about at such a rate that they feared his brains would have been beaten out; nor did they find it possible to hold him. His bedclothes were pulled from him, his bed shaken, and his bedstaff leap forward and backward. The man took him to keep him in a chair, but the chair fell a-dancing and both of them were very near being thrown into the fire.

These, and a thousand such vexations, befalling the boy at home, they carried him to live abroad at a doctor's. There he was quiet, but returning home he suddenly cried out he was pricked on the back, where they found strangely sticking a three-tined fork which belonged unto the doctor and had been seen at his house after the boy's departure. Afterwards, his troublers found him out at the doctor's also where, crying out again he was pricked on the back, they found an iron spindle stuck into him, and on the like cry out again they found pins in a paper stuck into him, and once more a long iron, a bowl of a spoon, and a piece of panshred in like stuck upon him. He was taken out of his bed and thrown under it, and all the knives belonging to the house were, one after another, stuck into his back, which the spectators pulled out, only one of them seemed unto the spectators to come out of his mouth. The poor boy was divers times thrown into the fire and preserved from scorching there with much ado. For a long while he barked like a dog, and then he clucked like a hen and could not speak rationally. His tongue would be pulled out of his mouth, but when he could recover it so far as to speak he complained that a man called P---I appeared unto him as the cause of all.

Once, in the daytime, he was transported where none could find him, 'til at last they found him creeping on one side and sadly dumb and lame. When he was able to express himself he said that P----I had carried him over the top of the house and hurled him against a cartwheel in the barn, and accordingly they found some remainders of the threshed barley, which was on the barn floor, hanging about his garments.

The spectre would make all his meat, when he was going to eat, fly out of his mouth and instead thereof make him fall to eating of ashes and sticks and yarn. The man and his wife, taking the boy to bed with them, a chamber pot and its contents was thrown upon them; they were severely pinched and pulled out of the bed, and many other fruits of devilish spite were they dogged withal until it please God mercifully to shorten the chain of the devil. But before the devil was chained up, the invisible hand, which did all these things, began to put on an astonishing visibility.

They often thought they felt the hand that scratched them, while yet they saw it not; but when they thought they had hold of it, it would give them the slip. Once, the fist beating the

man was discernible, but they could not catch hold of it. At length an apparition of a Blackamoor child showed itself plainly to them, and another time a drumming on the boards was heard, which was followed with a voice that sang, "Revenge! Revenge! Sweet is revenge!" At this, the people, being terrified, called upon God, whereupon there followed a mournful note several times uttering these expressions:

"Alas! Alas! We knock no more, we knock no more!" and there was an end of all.

The Fourth Example

In the year 1683 the house of Nicholas Desborough, at Hartford, was very strangely molested by stones, by pieces of earth, by cobs of Indian corn, and other such things, from an invisible hand, thrown at him, sometimes through the door, sometimes through the window, sometimes down the chimney, and sometimes from the floor of the room (though very close) over his head; and sometimes he met with them in the shop, the yard, the barn, and in the field.

There was no violence in the motion of the things thus thrown by the invisible hand, and though others besides the man happened sometimes to be hit, they were never hurt with them. Only the man himself once had pain given to his arm, and once blood fetched from his leg by these annoyances, and a fire, in an unknown way kindled, consumed no little part of his estate.

This trouble began upon a controversy between Desborough and another person about a chest of clothes which the man apprehended to be unrighteously detained by Desborough, and it endured for divers months, but upon the restoring of the clothes thus detained, the trouble ceased. At Brightling in Sussex in England there happened a tragedy not unlike to this, in the year 1659. 'Tis recorded by Clark in the second volume of his *Examples*.

The Fifth Example

On June 11, 1682, showers of stone were thrown by an invisible hand upon the house of George Walton at Portsmouth. Whereupon the people going out found the gate wrung off the hinges and stones flying and falling thick about them and striking of them seemingly with a great force, but really effected 'em no more than if a soft touch were given them.

The glass windows were broken to pieces by stones that came not from without but from from within, and other instruments were in like manner hurled about. Nine of the stones they took up, whereof some were as hot as if they came out of the fire, and, marking them, they laid them on the table, but in a little while they found some of them again flying about.

The spit was carried up the chimney and, coming down with the point forward, stuck in the back-log from whence one of the company, removing it, it was, by an invisible hand, thrown out at the window.

This disturbance continued from day to day and sometimes a dismal, hollow whistling would be heard, and sometimes the trotting and snorting of a horse, but nothing to be seen.

The man went up the great bay in a boat unto a farm he had there, but there the stones found him out, and carrying from the house to the boat a stirrup-iron, the iron came jingling after him through the woods as far as his house and at last went away and was heard of no more. The anchor leaped overboard several times and stopped the boat.

A cheese was taken out of the press and crumbled all over the floor; a piece of iron stuck in the wall and a kettle hung thereupon. Several cocks of hay, mowed near the house, were taken up and hung upon the trees, and others made into small whisps and scattered about the house.

The man was much hurt by some of the stones. He was a Quaker and suspected that a woman, who charged him with injustice in detaining some land from her, did by withcraft occasion these preternatural occurrences.

However, at last, they came unto an end.

The Sixth Example

In June, 1682, Mary, the wife of Antonio Hortado, dwelling near the Salmon Falls, heard a voice at the door of her house calling, "What do you here?" and about an hour after had a blow on her eye that almost spoiled her.

Two or three days after, a great stone was thrown along the house which, the people going to take it up, was unaccountably gone. A frying pan then in the chimney rang so loud that the people at a hundred rods distance heard it; and the said Mary with her husband, going over the river in a canoe, they saw the head of a man and, about three foot off, the tail of a cat swimming before the canoe, but no body to join them, and the same apparition again followed the canoe when they returned, but at their landing it first disappeared.

A stone thrown by an invisible hand after this caused a swelling and a soreness in her head, and she was bitten on both arms black and blue, and her breast scratched, the impression of the teeth, which were like a man's teeth, being seen by many.

They deserted their house on these occasions, and though at a neighbor's house they were at first haunted with apparitions, the satanical molestations quickly ceased.

When Antonio returned unto his own house, at his entrance there he heard one walking in his chamber and saw the boards buckle under the feet of the walker, and yet there was no body there. For this cause he went back to dwell on the other side of the river, but thinking he might plant his ground though he left his house, he had five rods of good log-fence thrown down at once -- and the footing of neat cattle plainly to be seen almost between every row of corn in the field, yet no cattle seen there, nor any damage done to his corn, or so much as a leaf of it cropped.

The Seventh Example

Mr. Philip Smith, aged about fifty years -- a son of eminently virtuous parents; a deacon of a church in Hadley; a member of the General Court; a justice in the country court; a select man for the affairs of the town; a lieutenant of the troop; and, which crowns all, a man for devotion, sanctity, gravity, and all that was honest, exceeding exemplary -- was, in the winter of the year 1864, murdered with a hideous witchcraft, that filled all those parts of New England with astonishment.

He was, by his office, concerned about relieving the indigences of a wretched woman in the town, who, being dissatisfied at some of his just cares about her, expressed herself unto him in such a manner that he declared himself thenceforward apprehensive of receiving mischief at her hands.

About the beginning of January he began to be very valetudinarian, laboring under pains that seemed Ischiatick. The bystanders could now see in him one ripening apace for another world, and filled with grace and joy to a high degree. He showed such weanedness from, and weariness of, the world that he knew not (he said) whether he might pray for his continuance here, and such assurance he had of the Divine love unto him that in raptures he would cry out, "Lord, stay thy hand! It is enough! It is more than thy frail servant can bear!" But in the midst of these things he still uttered a hard suspicion that the ill woman who had threatened him had made impressions with enchantments upon him.

While he remained yet of sound mind, he very sedately, but very solemnly, charged his brother to look well after him. Though, he said, he now understood himself, yet he knew not how he might be. "But be sure," said he, "to have a care of me, for you shall see strange things. There shall be wonder in Hadley! I shall not be dead when 'tis thought I am!" His pressed this charge over and over, and afterwards became delirious, upon which he had a speech incessant and voluble and (as was judged) in various languages.

In his distresses he exclaimed much upon the woman aforesaid, and others, as being seen by him in the room, and there was divers times, both in that room and over the whole house, a strong smell of something like musk which once particularly so scented an apple roasting at the fire that it forced them to throw it away.

Some of the young men in the town, being out of their wits at the strange calamities thus upon one of their most beloved neighbors, went three or four times to give disturbance unto the woman thus complained of, and all the while they were disturbing of her, he was at ease and slept as a weary man. Yea, these were the only times that they perceived him to take any sleep in all his illness.

Gally pots of medicines, provided for the sick man, were unaccountably emptied; audible scratchings were made about the bed, when his hands and feet lay wholly still and were held by others. They beheld fire sometimes on the bed, and when the beholders began to discourse of it, it vanished away. Divers people actually felt something often stir in the bed, at a considerable distance from the man -- it seemed as big as a cat, but they could never grasp it. Several trying to lean on the bed's head, though the sick man lay wholly still, the bed would shake so as to knock their heads uncomfortably. A very strong man could not lift the sick man to make him lie more easily, though he applied his utmost strength to it, and yet he could go presently and lift a bed-stead and a bed, and a man lying on it, without any strain to himself at all.

Mr. Smith dies. The jury that viewed his corpse found a swelling on one breast, his privates wounded or burned, his back full of bruises, and several holes that seemed made with awls. After the opinion of all had pronounced him dead, his countenance continued as lively as if he had been alive -- his eyes closed as if in a slumber and his nether jaw not falling down.

Thus he remained from Saturday morning about sunrise 'til Sabbath-day in the afternoon, when those who took him out of the bed found him still warm, though the season was as cold as had almost been known in any age, and a New England winter does not want for cold. On the night following, his countenance was yet fresh as before, but on Monday morning they found the face extremely tumified and discolored. It was black and blue and fresh blood seemed running down his cheek upon the hairs. Divers noises were also heard in the room where the corpse lay, as the clattering of chairs and stools, whereof no account could be given. This was the end of so good a man.

And I could, with unquestionable evidence, relate the tragical deaths of several good men in this land, attended with such preternatural circumstances, which have loudly called upon us all to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

The Eighth Example

There was one Mary Johnson tried at Hartford, in this country, upon an indictment of "familiarity with the devil," and was found guilty thereof, chiefly upon her own confession. Her confession was attended with such convictive circumstances that it could not be slighted. Very many material passages relating to this matter are now lost, but so much as is well known, and can still be proved, shall be inserted:

She said her first familiarity with the devil came through discontent and wishing the devil to take this and that, and the devil to do that and t'other thing, whereupon a devil appeared unto her, tendering her what services might best content her. A devil, accordingly, did for her many services.

Her master blamed her for not carrying out the ashes, and a devil afterwards would clear the hearth of ashes for her. Her master sending her to drive out the hogs that sometimes broke into their field, a devil would scare the hogs away and make her laughed to see how it feared them.

She confessed that she had murdered a child and committed uncleanness both with men and with devils. In the time of her imprisonment, the famous Mr. Smith was at great pains to promote her conversion from the devil to God, and she was, by the best observers, judged very penitent both before her execution and after it, and she went out of the world with comfortable hopes of mercy from God through the merit of our Savior. Being asked what she built her hopes upon, she answered, "Upon these words: 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' and these: 'There is a fountain set open for sin and uncleanness'."

And she died in a frame extremely to the satisfaction of them that were spectators of it.

The Ninth Example

Part I

Hoec ipse miserrima vidi.

[These things these wretched eyes beheld.]

Four children of John Goodwin, in Boston, which had enjoyed a religious education, and answered it with a towardly ingenuity--children, indeed, of an exemplary temper and carriage, and an example to all about then for piety, honesty, and industry--were, in the year 1868, arrested by a very stupendous witchcraft.

The eldest of the children--a daughter of about thirteen years old--saw cause to examine the laundress, the daughter of a scandalous Irish woman in the neighborhood, about some linen that was missing, and the woman bestowed very bad language on the child, in her daughter's defense, [after which] the child was immediately taken with odd fits that carried in them something *diabolical*.

It was not long before one of her sisters, with two of her brothers, were horribly taken with the like fits, which the most *experienced* physicians pronounced extraordinary and preternatural: One thing that the more confirmed them in this opinion was that all the children were tormented [in] the same part of their bodies, at the *same time*, tho' their

pains flew like swift lightning from one part unto another, and they were kept so far asunder that they neither saw nor heard one another's complaints. At 9 or 10 a-clock at night they had a release from their miseries and slept all night pretty comfortably. But when the day came, they were most miserably handled.

Sometimes they were *deaf*, sometimes *dumb*, sometimes *blind*, and often all this at once. Their tongues would be drawn down their throats and then pulled out upon their chins to a prodigious length. Their mouths were forc'd open to such a wideness that their jaws went out of joint, and anon clap together again with a force like that of a spring lock, and the like would happen to their shoulder blades and their elbows and hand wrists and several of their joints. They would lie in a benumbed condition and be drawn together like those that are ty'd neck and heels, and presently be stretched out--yea, *drawn back* enormously. They made piteous outcries that they were cut with *knives* and struck with *blows*, and the plain prints of the wounds were seen upon them. Their necks would be broken so that their neckbone would seem dissolved unto them that felt after it, and yet, on the sudden, it would become again so stiff that there was no stirring of their heads. Yea, their heads would be twisted almost round, and if the main force of their friends at any time obstructed a dangerous motion which them seemed upon, they would roar exceedingly. And when devotions were performed with them, their *hearing* was utterly taken from them.

[When] the ministers of Boston and Charlestown, [kept] a day of prayer with fasting, on this occasion, at the troubled house, the youngest of the four children was immediately, happily, finally delivered from all its trouble. But the magistrates, being awakened by the noise of these grievous and horrid occurrences, examined the person who was under the suspicion of having employed these troublesome daemons, and she gave such a wretched account of herself that she was committed unto the [jailer's] custody.

It was not long before this woman (whose name was Glover) was brought upon her trial, but then the court could have no answers from her but in the Irish, which was her native language, although she understood English very well and had accustomed her whole family to none but English in her former conversation. When she pleaded to her indictment, it was with owning and *bragging* rather than *denial* of her guilt. And the interpreters, by whom the communication between the bench and the barr was managed, were made sensible that a *spell* had been laid by another witch on *this* to prevent her telling tales by confining her to a language which 'twas hoped nobody would understand.

The woman's house being searched, several *images* (or *poppets*) or babies made of rags and stuffed with goats' hair were thence produced, and the vile woman confessed that her way to torment the objects of her malice was by wetting her finger with spittle and stroaking [the] little images.

The abused children were then present in the court [and] the woman kept stooping and shrinking as one that was almost prest unto death with a mighty weight upon her. But, one

of the images being brought unto her, she oddly and swiftly started up and snatched it into her hand, but she had no sooner snatched it than one of the children fell into sad fits before the whole assembly. The judges had their just apprehension at this, and carefully causing a repetition of the experiment, they still found the same event of it, tho' the children saw not when the hand of the witch was laid upon the images.

They asked her "whether she had any to stand by her?" She replied she had and, looking very pertly into the air, she added, "No, he's gone!" and then she acknowledged that she had *one*, who was her prince, with whom she mentioned I know not what communion. For which cause, the night after, she was heard expostulating with a devil for his thus deserting her, telling him that because he had served her so basely and falsely, she had confessed all.

However, to make all clear, the court appointed five or six physicians to examine her very strictly, whether she was no way crazed in her intellectuals. Divers hours did they spend with her, and in all that while, no discourse came from her but what was *agreeable*, particularly when they asked her what she thought of her soul she replied, "You ask me a very solemn question and I cannot tell what to say to it." She profest herself a Roman Catholic and could recite her *Pater-noster* in Latin very readily, but there was one clause or two very hard for her, whereof she said she could not repeat if she "might have all the world."

In the upshot, the doctors returned her *compos mentis* and sentence of death was passed upon her. Divers days past between her being arraigned and condemned and in this time one Hughes testified that her neighbor (called Howen), who was cruelly bewitched unto death about six years before, laid her death to the charge of this woman and bid her (the said Hughes) to remember this, for within six years their would be occasion to mention it.

One of Hughes' children was presently taken ill in the same woeful manner that Goodwin's was, and particularly the boy, in the night, cried out that a *black person* with a *blue cap* in the room tortured him and that they tried with their hand in the bed for to pull out his bowels.

The mother of the boy went unto Glover the day following and asked her why she tortured the poor lad at such a rate. Glover answered, "Because of the wrong [I] had received from [you]" and boasted that she had come at him as a black person with a blue cap and, with her hand in the bed, would have pulled his bowels out, but could not. Hughes denied that she had wronged her, and Glover, then desiring to see the boy, wished him well, upon which he had no more of his indispositions.

Part II

After the condemnation of the woman I did myself give divers visits unto her, wherein she told me that she did used to be at meetings where her prince, with four more, was present. She told me who the four were and plainly said that he prince was the devil. When I told her *that*, and *how*, her prince had cheated her, she replied, "If it be so, I am sorry for that!" And when she declined answering some things that I asked her, she told me she would fain give me a full answer, but her spirits would not give her the leave, nor could she consent, she said, without their leave, [and] that I should pray for her.

At her execution she said the afflicted children should not be relieved by her death, for others beside she had a hand in their affliction. Accordingly, the three children continued in their furnace as before, and it grew rather "seven times hotter" than it was. In their fits they cried out "They" and "Them" as the authors of their miseries, but who that "They" and "Them" were they were unable to declare. Yet, at last, one of the children was able to discern their shapes and utter their names.

A blow at the place where they saw the spectre was always felt by the boy himself in that part of his body that answered what might be stricken at; and this, tho' his back were turned and the thing so done, that there would be no collusion in it. But as a *blow* at the spectre always hurt him, so it always helped him, too: for after the agonies to which a push or stab at that had put him were over (as in a minute or two they would be), he would have a respite from his ails a considerable while and the spectre would be gone. Yea, 'twas very credibly affirmed that a dangerous woman or two in the town received wounds by the blows thus given to their spectres.

The calamities of the children went on till they barked at one another like dogs and then purred like so many cats. They would complain that they were in a *red-hot oven* and sweat and pant as much as if they had been really so. Anon they would say that cold water was thrown on them, at which they would shiver very much. They would complain of blows with great cudgels laid upon them, and we that stood by--though we could see no cudgels--could see the marks of the blows in red streaks upon their flesh. They would complain of being roasted on an *invisible spit* and lie and roll and groan as if it had been most sensibly so, and by-and-by shriek that knives were cutting them. They would complain that their heads were *nailed* unto the floor, and it was beyond an ordinary strength to pull them from thence. They would be so limber sometimes that it was judged every bone they had might be bent, and anon so stiff that not a joint of them could be stirred.

One of them dreamt that something was growing within his skin, across one of his ribs. An expert [surgeon] searcht the place and found there a brass pin which could not possibly come to lie there as it did without a prestigious and mysterious conveyance.

Sometimes they would be very mad and then would climb over high fences. Yea, they would fly like geese and be carried with an incredible swiftness through the air, having but just their toes now and then upon the ground (sometime not once in *twenty foot*), and their

arms *waved* like the wings of a bird. They were often very near drowning or burning of themselves, and they often strangled themselves with their neckclothes, but the providence of God still ordered the reasonable succours of them that looked after them. If their happened any mischief to be done where they were--as the dirtying of a garment or spilling of a cup or breaking of a glass--they would laugh *excessively*. But upon the least reproof of their parents, they were thrown into inexpressible anguish, and roar as *excessively*.

It usually took up [an] abundance of time to dress them or undress them, through the strange postures into which they would be *twisted* on purpose, to hinder it. And yet the daemons did not know our thoughts, for if we used a jargon and said, "Untie his neckcloth," but the party bidden understood our meaning to be "untie his shoe," the *neckcloth*, not the *shoe*, has been been by *writhen postures* rendered strangely *inaccessible*. In their beds they would be sometimes treated so that no clothes could, for an hour or two, be laid upon them.

If they were bidden to do a *needless* thing (as to rub a *clean* table), they were able to do it unmolested, but if to do any *useful* thing (as to rub a *dirty* table), they would presently, with many torments, be made incapable.

They were sometimes hindered from eating their meals by having their teeth set when anything was carried unto their mouths. If there were any discourse of God or Christ or any of the things "which are not seen and are eternal," they would be cast into *intolerable anguish*s. All praying to God and reading of His word would occasion them a very *terrible vexation*. Their *own* ears would then be stopped with their *own* hands, and they would roar and howl and shriek and hollow to drown the voice of the devotions. Yea, if anyone in the room took up a Bible to look into it--though the children could see nothing of it (as being in a crowd of spectators or having their faces another way)--[they] would be in *wonderful torments* till the Bible was laid aside.

Briefly, *no good thing* might then be endured near those children which, while they were *themselves*, loved every good thing in a measure that proclaimed in them the fear of God. If I said unto them, "Child, cry to the Lord Jesus Christ!" their teeth instantly set. If I said, "Yea, child, look unto him!" their eyes were instantly pulled so far into their heads that we feared they could never have used them anymore.

Part III

It was the eldest of these children that fell chiefly under my own observation. I took her home to my own family, partly out of compassion to her parents, but chiefly that I might be a critical eyewitness of things that would enable me to confute the *sadducism* of this debauched age.

Here she continued well for some days, applying herself to actions of industry and piety, but [on] November 20, 1688, she cried out, "Ah, they have found me out!" and immediately she fell into her fits, wherein we often observed that she would cough up a ball, as big as a small egg, into the side of her windpipe, that would near choke her till, by stroking and by drinking, it was again carried down.

When I prayed in the room, first her hands were with a *strong*, tho' not *even*, force clapt upon her ears, and when her hands were, by force, pulled away, she cried out, "They make such a noise, I cannot hear a word!" She complained that Glover's chain was upon her leg and, assaying to go, her gait was exactly such as the *chained witch* had before she died.

When her tortures passed over, still frolicks would succeed, wherein she would continue hours--yea, days together--talking, perhaps never *wickedly* but always *wittily*, beyond herself. And at certain provocations, her torments would *renew* upon her, till we had left off to give them. Yet she frequently told us in these frolicks that if she but might steal or be drunk she should be well immediately. She told us that she must go down to the bottom of our well (and we had much ado to hinder it), for they said their was [a] plate there and they would bring her up safely again. We wondered at this, for she had never heard of any plate there, and we ourselves, who had newly bought the house, were ignorant of it. But the former owner of the house, just then coming in, told us there had been [a] plate for many years lost at the bottom of the well.

Moreover, one singular passion that frequently attended her was this: An *invisible chain* would be clapt about her, and she, in much pain and fear, [would] cry out when "They" put it on. Sometimes we could, with our hands, knock it off as it began to be fastened, but ordinarily, when it was on, she would be pulled out of her seat, with such violence, *towards* the fire, that it was as much as one or two of us could do to keep her out. Her eyes were not brought perpendicular to her feet, when she rose out of her seat, as the *mechanism* of an humane body requires in them that rise, but she was dragged *wholly* by other hands. And if we stamped on the hearth, just between her and the fire, she screamed out that by jarring the chain we hurt her.

I may add that "They" put an unseen rope, with a cruel noose, about her neck, whereby she was choked until she was black in the face. And tho' it was got off before it had killed her, yet there were the red marks of it, and of a finger and a thumb near it, remaining to be seen for some while afterwards.

Furthermore, not only upon her own looking into the Bible, but if anyone else in the room did, *wholly unknown* to her she would fall into unsufferable torments. A Quaker's book being brought her, she could quietly read whole pages of it, only the name of God and Christ she still skipped over, being unable to pronounce it, except sometimes, stammering a minute or two or more upon it. And when we urged her to tell what the word

was that she missed, she would say, "I must not speak it; they say I must not. You know what it is: 'Tis G and O and D." But a book against Quakerism "They" would not allow her to meddle with.

Such books as it might have been profitable and edifying for her to read--and especially her catechisms -- if she did but offer to read a line in them she would be cast into hideous convulsions and be tost about the house like a football. But books of jests being shown her, she could read them well enough and have cunning descants upon them. Popish books "They" would not hinder her from reading, but "They" would from reading books against Popery. A book which pretends to prove that there are no witches was easily read by her -- only the names [of] devils and witches might not be uttered. A book which proves that there are witches, being exhibited unto her, she might not read it. And that expression in the story of Ann Cole, about running to the rock, always threw her into sore convulsions.

Divers of these trials were made by many witnesses, but I, considering that there might be a snare in it, put a seasonable stop to this fanciful business. Only I could not but be amazed at one thing: A certain prayerbook being brought her, she not only could read it very well, but also did read a large part of it over, calling it her Bible, and putting a more than ordinary respect upon it. If she were going into her tortures, at the tender of this book she would recover herself to read it. Only when she came to the Lord's Prayer -- now and then occurring in that book -- she would have her eyes put out so that she must turn over a new leaf, and then she could read again. Whereas also there are scriptures in that book, she could read them there, but if any shewed her the very same scriptures in the Bible itself she would sooner die than read them, and she was likewise made unable to read the Psalms in an ancient metre, which this prayerbook had in the same volume with it.

Besides these, there was another inexplicable thing in her condition. Every now and then an invisible horse would be brought unto her by those who she only called "Them" and her "company," upon the approach of which her eyes would still be closed up, for (said she), "They say I am a tell-tale and therefore they will not let me see them." Hereupon she would give a spring as one mounting an horse and, settling herself in a riding posture, she would, in her chair, be agitated as one sometimes ambling, sometimes trotting, and sometimes galloping very furiously. In these motions we could not *perceive* that she was moved by the stress of her feet upon the ground, for often she touched it not. When she had ridden a minute or two she would seem to be at a rendezvous with "Them" that were her "company," and there she would maintain a discourse with them, asking them many questions concerning herself (we gave her none of ours) and have answers from them, which indeed none but herself perceived. Then she would return and inform us how "They" did intend to handle her for a day or two afterwards and some other things that she inquired.

Her horse would sometimes throw her with much violence, especially if anyone stabbed or cut the air under her. But she would briskly mount again and perform her

fantastick journies, mostly in her chair. But sometimes she would be carried from her chair, out of one room, and into another, very oddly, in the posture of a riding woman. At length she pretended that her horse could ride up the stairs, and unto admiration she rode (that is, was tossed as one that rode) up the stairs. There then stood open the study of one belonging to the family, into which entering she stood immediately on her feet and cried out, "They are gone! They are gone! They say they cannot -- God won't let them come here!" Adding a reason for it which the owner of the study thought more *ind* than *true*.

And she presently and perfectly came to herself so that her whole discourse and carriage was altered unto the greatest measure of sobriety and she sat reading of the Bible and other good books for a good part of the afternoon. Her affairs calling her anon to go down again, the daemons were, in a quarter of a minute, as bad upon her as before -- and her *horse* was *waiting* for her.

Some then, to see whether there had not been a fallacy in what had *newly* happened, resolved for to have her up unto the study, where she had been at ease before. But she was then so strangely distorted that it was an *extreme difficulty* to drag her upstairs. The daemons would pull her out of the people's hands and make her *heavier* than perhaps *three* of herself. With incredible toil (tho' she kept screaming, "They say I must not go in!") she was pulled in, where she was no sooner got but she could stand on her feet and, with an altered note, say, "Now I am well!" She would be faint at first and say she "felt something to go out of her" (the noises whereof we sometimes heard, like those of a mouse), but in a minute or two she could apply herself to devotion and express herself with *discretion as well as ever* in her life.

To satisfy some strangers, the *experiment* was divers times, with the same success, repeated, until my loathness to have anything done, like making a charm of the room, caused me to forbid the repetition of it.

But enough of this.

Part IV

The ministers of Boston and Charlestown kept another day of prayer with fasting for Goodwin's afflicted family, after which the children had a sensible, but a gradual, abatement of their sorrows, until *perfect ease* was at length restored unto them. The young woman dwelt at my house the rest of the winter, having by a virtuous conversation made herself enough welcome to the family.

But ere long I thought it convenient for me to entertain my congeration with a sermon on the "memorable providences" wherein these children had been concerned. When I had begun to study my sermon, her *torments* again seized upon her and managed her with a special design, as was plain, to disturb me in what I was then about.

In the worst of her extravagancies formerly, she was more dutiful to me than I had reason to expect. But now her whole carriage to me was with a *sauciness* which I was not used anywhere to be treated withal. She would knock at my study door, affirming that "some below would be glad to see me," though there was none that asked for me. And when I chided her for telling me what was false, her answer was, "Mrs. Mather is always glad to see you!" She would call to me with numberless impertinences, and when I came down, she would *throw* things at me, though none of them could ever hurt me, and she would hector me at a strange rate for something I was doing above and threaten me with *mischief* and *reproach* that should revenge it.

Few tortures now attended her, but such as were provoked. Her frolics were numberless, if we may call them hers. I was, in Latin, telling some young gentleman that, if I should bid her to look to God, her eyes would be put out, upon which, her eyes were presently served so. Perceiving that her troublers understood Latin, some trials were thereupon made whether they understood Greek and Hebrew, which it seems they also did. But the Indian languages they did seem not so *well* to understand.

When we went unto prayer, the daemons would throw her on the floor at the feet of him that prayed, where she would whistle and sing and yell to drown the voices of prayer, and she would fetch blows with her fist and kicks with her foot at the man that prayed. But still, her fist and foot would always recoil when they came within an inch or two of him, as if rebounding against a wall, and then she would beg hard of other people to strike him, which (you may be sure) not being done she cried out, "He has wounded me in the head." But before the prayer was over she would be laid for dead, wholly senseless and (unto appearances) breathless, with her belly swelled like a drum, and sometimes with croaking noises in her. Thus would she lie, most exactly with the stiffness and posture of one that had been two days laid out for dead. Once lying thus, as he that was praying was alluding to the words of the Canaanites and saying, "Lord, have mercy on a daughter vexed with a devil," there came a big, but low, voice from her, in which the spectators did not see her mouth move: "There's two or three of us." When prayer was ended she would revive in a minute or two and continue, as frolicsome as before.

She thus continued until Saturday towards the evening, when she assayed with as nimble and various and pleasant an application as could easily be used, for to divert the young folks in the family from such exercises as it was proper to meet the Sabbath withal. But they refusing to be diverted, she fell fast asleep and, in two or three hours, waked perfectly herself, weeping bitterly to remember what had befallen her.

When Christmas arrived, both she at my house and her sister at home were by the daemons made very drunk, though we are fully satisfied they had no *strong drink* to make them so, nor would they willingly have been so, to have gained the world. When she began to feel herself drunk, she complained, "Oh, they say they will have me to keep Christmas with them. They will disgrace me when they can do nothing else." And

immediately the ridiculous behaviors of one drunk were, with a wondrous exactness, represented in her *speaking* and *reeling* and *spewing* and anon *sleeping*, till she was well again.

At last the daemons put her upon saying that she was dying, and the matter proved such that we feared she really *was*, for she lay, she tossed, she pulled, just like one dying, and urged hard for someone to die with her, seeming loth to *die alone*. She argued concerning death with a paraphrase on the thirty-first Psalm in strains that quite amazed us, and concluded that tho' she was "loth to die,"if God said she must, *she must!* Adding that the Indians would quickly shed much blood in the country and horrible tragedies would be acted in the land. Thus the vexation of the children ended.

But after awhile, they began again, and then one particular minister, taking a particular compassion on the family, set himself to serve them in the methods prescribed by our Lord Jesus Christ. Accordingly, the Lord being *besought thrice* in *three* days of prayer, with fasting on this occasion, the family then saw their *deliverance* perfected, and the children afterwards -- all of them -- not only approved themselves devout Christians, but unto the praise of God reckoned these, their afflictions, among the special *incentives* of their Christianity.

The ministers of Boston and Charlestown afterwards accompanied the printed narrative of these things with their attestation to the truth of it. And when it was reprinted at London, the famous Mr. Baxter prefixed a preface unto it, wherein he says: "This great instance comes with such convincing evidence that he must be a very obdurate Sadducee that will not believe it."

The Tenth Example

William Davies, with nine sailors, whereof one was a negro and one a boy and one a passenger, sailed out of Boston [on] December 28, 1695 in the ship called *Margaret*, of about eighty tons, bound for Barbadoes, laden with fish, beef, and a small parcel of lumber.

Within a few days, one of the sailors, named Winlock Curtis, being at the helm about 8 a-clock at night, called unto the captain, telling him that he could steer no longer. Whereof, when the captain asked him the reason, he besought the said captain to think him "neither drunk nor mad," and then added that he had but a little time to tarry here, constanly affirming therewithal that a spirit, appearing by the *Biddekel*, accused him of killing a woman (which the sailor said that he had left alive) and reported unto him that the rest of the ship's company had signed "*the book*," which he was, from that argument, now urged also to sign. The sailor declared his resolution that he would never hearken to the devil and requested that he might be furnished with a Bible, in the reading whereof he was at first greatly interrupted, but at length he was able to distinctly read it.

On the day following he was violently and suddenly seized in an *unaccountable manner* and *furiously thrown down* upon the deck, where he lay *wallowing* in a great agony and foamed at the mouth and grew black in the face and was near strangled with a *great lump* rising in his neck nigh his throat, like that which *bewitched* or *possessed* people use to be attended withal.

In a few days he came a little to himself, but still behaved himself as one much under the power of some devil, talking of the visions which he *saw* in the air and of a spirit coming for him with a boat. The ship's company, to prevent him going overboard to the invisible spirit -- which he attempted once to do -- confined him to his cabin and there ty'd him and bound him so that they tho't they ha him fast enough, but he soon came forth without noise, to their great astonishment. He then fell into a sleep, wherein he continued for *twenty-four hours*, after which he came to himself and remained very sensible, giving a particular narrative of the odd circumstances which he had been in, and calling for pen and ink to write them down. But he put off doing it until the ship, then under a fresh gale, should be a little quieter, and so it came to be altogether neglected.

Upon January 17, in the north lat. 19, sailing S.W. with a fresh gale east and E. and by S., about 9 at night, a small white cloud arose without rain or any extraordinary increase of wind, which, falling upon the ship, immediately pressed her down to starboard at once, and, the hatches flying out, she was immediately so full of water that it was impossible to recover her. If she had not been laden with lumber she must have sunk to the bottom; whereas now, being full of water, which drowned the boy sleeping in the cabin, she soon righted and floated along, overflowed with sea, after [which], for eleven weeks together, in which time there happened the ensuing passages:

First, within a few days, one Mr. Dibs, the passenger (who had formerly been very undaunted and courageous), began to talk oddly of several persons in Barbadoes, adding that one stood at the main mast, who came for him with a wherry. And soon after this he was gone insensibly, none knowing *when* or *how*.

About a fortnight after this one John Jones was in the same *insensible manner* carried away, and so was the above mentioned Winlock Curtis. Within about a fortnight more one of their number died thro' the unconquerable difficulties of the voyage. And about a fortnight further the negro, sitting as not right in his mind, and another sailor were, in the night, *insensibly* carried away. About a week after one Sterry Lion, the carpenter, not being in any disorder of mind at all, often spoke of his end beng at hand and that it would be by a wave of the sea fetching him away. Him they *saw* carried away by a wave about 9 a-clock in the morning.

All this while their food was *only* flesh -- which they ate raw because they could now have no fire -- and fresh fish, which in great quantities came into the vessel unto them. At several times, and especially before the taking away of any one of their number, they

heard various and wondrous noises, like the voice of birds, as turkeys and other fowl. While they were in this condition they saw three vessels and udged tat all the three saw them. Nevertheless, none came a-near to relieve them.

Their lodging was on two boards placed athwart the rail, near the taff'ril, covered with a sail, and the first land they discovered was Desiado, but a northerly current hindered their landing there. The next land was *grand terra*, but the wind in the north hindered their landing there, also. At last, with a little sail, being reduced to three in number, they ran their ship ashore at Guadalupa [on] the sixth of April, about 2 a-clock on Monday morning, where the French kindly entertained them, not as prisoners but as travellers.

Thence they came to Barbadoes, and there they made oath to the truth of this narrative.

The Eleventh Example

Reader, into this chapter, with too much of reason, may be transcribed a passage which I have had occasion formerly to publish in a book about the "cause and cure of a wounded spirit":

There are very cruel *self-murderers*, whereto the wounds on people's *consciencs* have driven them. Such a consternation is upon them that they can't pitch upon any other project for their own repose, than that of hanging, drowning, stabbing, poisoning, or some such foaming piece of *madness*. But in God's name, *think again* before you do so vile a thing! Think by whose impulse 'tis that you are dragged into this cursed action. Truly, 'tis a more ordinary impulse of the devil, whereof I have seen most prodigious evidences.

One that came to me with a "wounded soul," after all that I could plead with him, left me with these words: "Well, the devil will have me after all!" And some company just them hindering me from going after him, as I intended, ere I could get at him, he was found sitting in his chamber choaked unto death with a *rope*, which rope nevertheless was found not about his neck, but in his *hand* and on his *knee*.

The sensible *assistance* which the devil had frequently among us given to these *unnatural executions* does manifestly shew that they who dogged the swine into the deep of old are the same that compel persons to be so much worse than swine, as to kill themselves. These doleful creatures we have seen sometimes hang themselves to death, while their feet are yet upon the ground -- yea, by a line which hath presently broken, and yet left them dead. And I think some that have been found and fetched before their life was wholly extinguished in them have confessed unto me this purpose: That they had no sooner given the first stop unto their breath but they presently lost all sort of sense, only they felt such a load immediately upon their shoulders that they could not help themselves, though their knees were upon the floor all the while.

Moreover, the strange obstructions that are given to mens' coming into a probability of deliverance from their hurries, do further manifest that the armies of hell are herein beleaguering of them. How often people have been at a minister's door to have spoken with him, but having no power to knock, they have gone away and laid violent hands upon themselves! People at the threshold of this very meetinghouse have had a forcible and furious kind of whisper made in their minds that they must be gone to some other congregation; but at length, overcoming their invisible pullbacks, they have come in, and a large part of my sermon hath been to dissuade any hurried souls from the murdering of themselves, which God has blessed unto the saving of them. It seems the bloody demons had, unto their vexation, some way learnt what I was to preach about.

The result of all this is thus much, since 'tis the devil which puts you upon your thus wronging of yourselves -- don't resign yourselves unto the conduct of that hellish murderer! Are the devil's hands, I pray, so desirable that you will needs throw yourselves into them, while the hands of the Saviour are yet open to receive you -- to relieve you?

"Oh, do thy self no harm!"